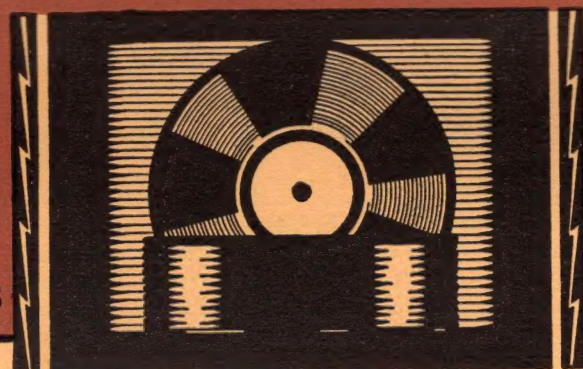


The
**AMERICAN
 MUSIC LOVER**

JULY, 1938

25 cents per copy



RECORDS

RADIO

Portrait Insert — Yehudi Menuhin	
A Contest	77
Ravel's Place In Modern Music, <i>John Melville Howard</i>	78
More Facts About Needles, <i>The Editor</i>	80
Story of Schumann's Ghost and His Violin Concerto, <i>Paul Girard</i>	83
Bach and Mozart — the High Gods, <i>Neville d'Esterre</i>	86
Overtones	89
The Library Shelf	91
Record Notes and Reviews	93
Swing Music Notes, <i>Enzo Archetti</i>	108
Record Collectors' Corner, <i>Julian Morton Moses</i>	110
In the Popular Vein, <i>Horace Van Norman</i>	111

EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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Sincerely yours
Yehudi Menuhin
1938

DeBellis
N.Y.

The American Music Lover

A Monthly Review of Phonograph Records, Music and Music

Volume IV, No. 3

July, 1938

Inserts: Prominent Musical Personalities — Past and Present

No. 7 — YEHUDI MENUHIN

(These pictures are for framing at the wish of the reader. They should be cut apart with a knife.)

A CONTEST

● FROM TIME TO TIME WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO RECOMMEND A REPRESENTATIVE collection of lieder recordings. This has not always been an easy task, since the size and extent of the collection has not always been stipulated, and one would naturally hesitate to recommend too much. The staff of *The American Music Lover* believes that many people would like to own a single album of lieder recordings which could be looked upon as a representative collection. In line with that thought, we have decided to invite our readers to present *their* ideas. Most lieder are recorded on 10-inch discs, so it strikes us that an album set of ten 10-inch lieder recordings could be devised to constitute a more or less representative collection.

For the two best lists submitted we will give a first prize of \$15.00 in records, and a second prize of \$10.00 in records, both prizes to be selected from any of the domestic record catalogs.

On page 96 of this issue will be found the rules governing the contest, and a coupon which must accompany every list mailed into to us. The questions asked on this coupon are merely for the information of the editors, and the answers will have no influence on the selections of the winners.

We realize, of course, that a ten-record collection would be far from exhaustive, but our inquiry is intended primarily to benefit the music lover whose record budget is of average size. Such a group of records could easily form a nucleus on which to base a sizeable collection of lieder discs.

The judges of the contest will be the staff of the magazine, and their decisions will be final.

Beginning next month *The American Music Lover* will adopt a new and more modern format, and will appear with a different colored cover each month. The size of the magazine will be the same.

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Ravel's Place In Modern Music

John Melville Howard

THE recent death of Maurice Ravel is almost symbolic. Ravel was the leading spirit of post-war music, which now seems a closed period. Though Debussy was perhaps its father, Ravel set the characterizing stamp to "modern" music when he discarded the "golden haze" of his master and began etching his miniatures with diamond sharp lines. There was much of the showman in him, the subtle showman who takes the place of the great dramatists (such as Wagner) in our own day. Debussy was a musical introvert; Ravel, using the same musical language, an extrovert.

This is not to say that Stravinsky did not go beyond Ravel toward the same ends, for he did, and long before the latter's death Stravinsky had become his successor as arbiter of the progressive style. Several characteristics of the new mode are mentioned above as inseparable from any discussion of Ravel: its sharp definition, its emphasis on striking virtuosity divorced from all sentimentality, its short forms, and its subtlety. One of the new music's commandments might have been: Never bore anyone; another: Say it differently at all costs. Effect was all. No ingredient which should thrill or startle the bourgeoisie was overlooked. Dance forms succeeded opera. All this made for a marvelously intricate and varied surface texture and hence, inevitably, a certain superficiality. Of the elders, Rimsky-Korsakov, to whom Ravel was indebted, most clearly shows the same gains and losses.

Paris, after Debussy, was the world's musical capital, drawing students from other

countries and returning them as full-fledged prophets of polytonality and of the genius of the potentates Ravel and Stravinsky. But Schoenberg in Germany was a growing threat with his counter-revolution of atonality, while the deep, steady stream of Sibelius was overflowing the boundaries of Finland and attracting those who hungered for the solidity and depth of the German classics.

Ravel's music is representative of certain mental attitudes which succeeded the great war. The old institutions had broken down. There was a childish delight in an unexpected freedom, carrying with it a haunting sense of insecurity. There was a great deal of energy spent in skimming surfaces and little in digging beneath. The sharp division between past and present bred a sort of whistling-in-the-dark confidence that one could make his own future to suit himself: it was only necessary to be original.

Such an attitude was necessarily ephemeral. Men found that the end of the world was still deferred and that the roots of human habit went below the worst catastrophes. In short, after the shock wore off, life proceeded pretty closely according to the same old patterns. Sibelius has come into his own, and the era of Ravel and Stravinsky is as definitely placed in musical history as that of Brahms and Wagner.

It remains to be asked what the place of Ravel is and what the value of his contribution. Humanly speaking, one of his greatest accomplishments was the popularization of art-music, a cause which he strongly advanced. Probably he was as surprised as the

Maurice
Ravel
In recent
Years.

Photo Lipnitzki



conductors by the sweeping success of *Bolero*, but it is hard to say that its melodramatic character was uncalculated. The same bid for a wide audience is apparent in his less successful glorifications of the fox-trot and the waltz. *Bolero* — played everywhere as a sure-fire encore by symphony orchestras, caught up by dance bands, and early given stirring performances on records by the Boston Symphony and foreign orchestras—gave Ravel a broad audience for his more important work which proved to be no less interesting. Such were *Rapsodie Espagnole*, the *Daphnis et Chloë* ballet suite and *Ma Mère l'Oye*, all of them finely recorded domestically and abroad.

Ravel was fortunate in composing during a period when he could profit fully by phonograph and radio, his brief works being admirably adaptable to those mediums. Nevertheless he gave full value in return, and undoubtedly greatly moderated popular suspicion of classical music by his exuberant vitality and timeliness. It is safe to say that many a young musician owes his wider hearing of fine music to the success of *Bolero*.

The gusto of a youthful spirit is a quality rare and precious enough in any art. If it transgresses the forms beyond reason and upsets the digestion of the musicologists, that is too bad, but if it gives glimpses of new frontiers and takes breath-taking shortcuts across plotted ways, that is good for the art. It is well known that an innovator is seldom a consummate genius; still the pioneers are necessary before the builders of cities.

Ravel was an innovator and a technical master. If he failed of large accomplishment he at least did not attempt it. Like De-

bussy and Eric Satie, he was content with a small field and therein was nearly perfect. He has been likened to a brilliant fencer who never loses his temper, full of scintillating devices, never taking it more seriously than a game, himself untouchable. Thoroughly representative of his time and place, not Stravinsky nor Schoenberg nor Honneger will supersede him for future music lovers. In spite of all his half-serious experiments Ravel remained himself, a dashing Gallic gentleman.

Recommended Recordings

Orchestra

ALBORADO DEL GRAZIOSO — Ormandy - Minneapolis Sym. (Victor 8552); Straram Orch. (Columbia 68077D).

BOLERO — Mengelberg - Concertgebouw Orch. (Columbia Set X-22); Koussevitzky - Boston Sym. Orch. (Victor Set M-352).

DAPHNIS ET CHLOE - 2ND SUITE—Straram Orch. (Columbia Set X-32); Koussevitzky - Boston Sym. Orch. (Victor 7143-4).

MA MERE L'OYE — Koussevitzky - Boston Symphony Orch. (Victor 7370-1).

RAPSODIE ESPAGNOLE — Stokowski - Philadelphia Orchestra (Victor 8282-3).

LA VALSE — Koussevitzky - Boston Sym. Orch. (Victor 7413-4).

VALE NOBLES ET SENTIMENTALES — Copola - Paris Cons. Orch. (Victor 11727-8).

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION (Moussorgsky - Arr. Ravel) — Koussevitzky - Boston Sym. Orch. (Victor Set M-102).

(Continued on Page 92)

More Facts About Needles

Peter Hugh Reed

RECENTLY we asked Mr. Gordon Mercer, Musicraft's recording engineer, to make some tests on needles for us, and to let us have his findings. The result of this suggestion seems to have taken wings, and with excellent results too, for Mr. Mercer made not only the tests we suggested but also others and finding himself with considerable material on hand, he decided to write his own needle article, which Musicraft has issued in pamphlet form. This pamphlet, we are told, is to be one of a series; the others will discuss pickups, amplifiers, speakers, motors, care of records, etc.

A discussion of needles is always a provocative one, for no matter how correct you may be in your statements there is always someone who feels hurt because he does not agree with you. Take for example the case of the metallic needle, which is unconditionally endorsed by the foremost laboratories and sound engineers, against the case of the non-metallic needle, which is primarily endorsed by record buyers, who disliking surface noise wish to reduce it, or, disliking the idea of the wear to which a record is subjected wish to preserve their fine recordings. The latter is assuredly a worthy principle, but hardly helpful to the full enjoyment of fine recordings.

People for and against metallic or non-metallic needles are like old-time politicians. They remain either out-and-out Republicans or Democrats, no matter which side is proved right. It is almost as bad as the difference between the Communist and the Fascist. How can the one be right, when the other is certain he is.

A year and a half ago, we wrote an article on metallic needles, stating simple facts — facts that can be backed up by authorities in the field. Never did we provoke such bitter reader comment. Partisans of the non-metallic needle, declining to be downright rude, refrained from calling us a liar, but in

many roundabout ways they made themselves heard. Believe it or not, we actually lost a few subscriptions, but at the same time we gained considerably more.

Several months later, when we ran an article on non-metallic needles by Mr. Chapman, who wrote the excellent treatise on the pickup (which appeared in our pages of November, 1937), a lot of readers thought we were doing an about-face. This was not, however, the case. We were simply presenting the non-metallic needle side. Mr. Chapman ended his article with the same pertinent statement that concluded our own, i. e. "the needle problem is an individual problem." His observations on surface noise and on record wear were excellently set forth. But, and this is most important, Mr. Chapman did not state that *better reproduction is obtained from non-metallic needles*, because being himself a sound expert he knew that this was a fallacy.

Whether the record-buyer wishes to acknowledge it or not, the truth is *the harder the point the better the reproduction*. For a number of years the Bell Laboratories and other leading sound concerns, have been using jewel points exclusively. Of course, the pickup in use has been a very light one. It is claimed that in a pickup having a weight of one ounce or less on the record a diamond-tipped needle (the hardest of all points) can be safely used without undue wear of the record.

This brings us to the discussion of the new needle our readers have been asking us about, the Walco sapphire. After intensive tests of over a month we have found that the claims made for this needle are on the whole just. In tests conducted from an aligned crystal pickup through an especially built set reproducing frequencies from 30 to 7,000 cycles per second, we found the needle singularly free from peaks. This, however, did not prove true in the case of a high-fre-

quency magnetic pickup. Here, we found the needle guilty of peaking very badly around 5,000 c. p. s., whereas a chromium needle used in the same pickup proved to have a consistently flat response. At this point we might point out that a filter can be placed upon almost any pickup to remove an undesirable peak, provided, of course, the same needle is to be retained in use.

Let us digress here a moment and consider peaks, which we failed to discuss in our previous article on needles (January, 1937). Peaks are excessive "tonalities", or an over-emphasis on a single note affecting neighboring tones, occurring at different points of pitch. This would mean that each time that this single note was heard, it would sound excessively loud, and this loudness in a slightly smaller degree would be imparted to several neighboring tones, their number depending upon the sharpness of the peak. Practically everybody recognizes low peaks, which occur as a decidedly disagreeable rumbling or "boominess", whereas very few people recognize the high ones.

Three Sources of Peaks

Mr. Mercer tells us that there are three principal sources of peaks in reproduction.

1. Those that are due to defectively designed pickups, and to needles, or to a combination of both.
2. Those that are due to resonance in the tone-arm. These occur between frequencies of 100 to 400 c. p. s.
3. Those that are due to resonant frequency of the speaker and/or the cabinet. This occurs in the frequency range from 120 c. p. s. downward.

High peaks, which are mainly due to needles, are heard as added brilliance or shrillness, and are particularly marked in the violins, the brasses, and the soprano voice. Peaks in needles, Mr. Mercer points out in his article, result "from lack of complete rigidity in the needle". "This presence of peaks," he goes on to say, "owing to lack of stiffness constitutes one of the most serious defects of fibre and cactus needles." In other words, fibre and cactus needles definitely accentuate peaks. In needles, peaks vary with different pickups and are traceable in part to the resistance of the needle movement, and to mass and configuration of all the moving parts in the pickup.

Almost every commercial machine is guilty of peaks at different points, and so is almost every needle, and more especially a non-metallic one. In the case of the metallic

needle the peaks usually lie above the 5,000 c. p. s. frequency range, and because so many commercial machines either do not reproduce frequencies above this point, or else reproduce them weakly, these peaks are not generally noticeable. In the case of the non-metallic needle, however, peaks are much lower, some as far down as 2,500 c. p. s.

There are a number of people who use non-metallic needles who mistake their peaks or added brilliance and shrillness at certain points, for high frequencies. Unaware that their sets are not equipped to reproduce *highs* in reality, and finding that the non-metallic needle gives a variable brilliance at points where a metallic needle does not, they have been led to believe, or else assume that these increased "tonalities" are high frequencies. They are not; they are peaks.

Concerning Highs

While on the subject of high frequencies, it might be well to consider the practical side of their reproduction. Mr. Mercer says in his article that because of the loss of initial sharpness in the needle after a few turns the extremely fine vibrations that comprise the highs in a recorded groove are not reproduced by most commercial needles. From the results of tests he has made, results which we find substantiated by others, he "estimates that the highest tone that can be played without distortion is about 6,000 cycles per second." Most commercial recordings issued today, according to a number of experts with whom we have talked, cut off at 6,000 c. p. s. flat. Those who are getting highs above this have added high compensation to their sets and are, on some records, enjoying with it a considerable amount of hiss.

To return to the sapphire needle: these needles will not ruin fine records. For those who use a record changing device on their machine (assuming that the record changer is not out of adjustment or the pickup too heavy) this is, in our estimation, one of the best needles that have been placed on the market so far. If the pickup weighs over three to three and one-half ounces, however, there is always the danger of the needle being chipped when dropped onto the record. Despite their hardness and their permanence, both a sapphire and a diamond point may chip if dropped or carelessly handled. A child playing records with one of these needles might very easily ruin it by careless handling, and the parent later going on to play a fine record would find the point cutting its surface badly. This should

be borne in mind, because should such a thing happen, it would not be, and should not be claimed, a fault of the needle.

Scratch can be eliminated, as Mr. Mercer states, by the use of the tone control. We do not recommend this, however, as it will definitely cut off the high frequencies and cause the reproduction to become flat and often less clear. *Definition in music should be more important to a true music lover than surface noise.*

To turn our attention to non-metallic needles: there have been several thorn varieties issued recently in Europe. Three of these needles we have had excellent opportunities to examine. Tests made with a vacuum-volt meter have proved that Mr. Chapman was correct in his statement that the non-metallic needle will reproduce high frequencies. But, as he stated, these *highs* are neither as marked nor as brilliant as they are when a metallic needle is in use. In England, the thorn needle has been tested and approved by a number of leaders in the record world. The claims set forth for these needles have been extensive, to say the least. In the case of one needle, an advertising claim is made that it will play 50 records. This is misleading, for although the claim does not stipulate *without resharpening*, people reading the ad naturally infer this. Testing one of these needles we found it was definitely noisier than the cactus, and although it held up longer it offered no appreciably better reproduction. In the case of another needle, the contention is made that it will "easily play eight or more records consecutively." This we found true on the initial use of the needle, but not true on its resharpened points. In fact, we were unable to get more than two or three satisfactory playings out of any resharpened thorn needle. The lack of uniformity in these needles is a definitely bad feature. Too many of them are too thin, and therefore given to an excessive number of peaks and even to blastings.

The contention that the thorn needle will reproduce the entire frequency range capable of being recorded proved true only on the initial playing with it. The second time the needle was used there were less *highs*, and each consecutive time that the needle was used, as long as the point reproduced with good definition, which did not exceed eight playings, the *highs* were less and less. This test was conducted through a vacuum-tube voltmeter. Upon examining the needles through a microscope after each playing we

were astonished with the changing character of the point. With each re-playing it became more ragged. The danger of using needles like this too long is that they may shoulder, and, as Mr. Chapman pointed out in his article on needles, if non-metallic needles "are permitted to shoulder they will do extensive damage to the record and introduce as much noise as steel needles." In using non-metallic needles it is well to avoid experiments on point duration, since one has no warning signal on shouldering, which can do irreparable damage to fine records.

The thorn needle, in our estimation, is not as smooth or as uniform as the imported cactus needle.

Mr. Mercer, at the end of his article, recommends several makes of needles. Since his recommendations largely coincide with our own, it is not necessary to give them all here. Shadowgraphed steel needles, chromium needles, the new sapphire and B. C. N. Emerald needles have been the ones used by the staff of *The American Music Lover*. To date, no reports have been given of any undue damage to a record occasioned by the use of these needles, except where the rules of the game were not adhered to. Those rules, as we see them, are: not to use a shadowgraph needle more than once, not to use a chromium needle more than twenty times, and never to remove it from the pickup and replace it, not to use a non-metallic needle more than three times (Mr. Chapman claims that it is best to resharpen after two playings and sometimes after one). The sapphire needle offers no restrictions, if carefully handled. It can be removed and reinstated in the pickup, but since it is curved at the point the curve part of the needle should point outward on the record. A number of sapphire needles have come through with too much bend and the result is bad reproduction. The bend should be one of about 20 degrees. Should any of our readers find that the needle is bent too much and the reproduction is not clearly defined, the sponsors of the needle, we are given to understand, will gladly replace it.

In signing off, let us say again — the needle problem is a personal one. What we would like to see every record buyer who is interested in getting the best out of his fine records do, is to ascertain which needle he thinks gives the best reproduction on his machine, then call in a technical man and have a test conducted on that needle for peaks, and then have the necessary filters put in to eliminate those peaks.

The Story of Schumann's Ghost and his Violin Concerto

Paul Girard

NOT a ghost! Yes, a ghost! It's an incredible story. One of those tales that really should have appeared in the early twenties, when people were endeavoring to attune themselves with the spirit world. A tale that the late Conan Doyle would have taken to, and possibly extended. Doyle claimed he was psychic, and firmly believed that he could tune in on life after death. In his later years, after he had made a fortune on his character Sherlock Holmes, he used a lot of ink describing the so-called "spirit messages" that he received. He and Sir Oliver Lodge provided some food for thought, and much consolation to those bereaved by the World War. Scientists disputed with them, refuted them, but the movement gained a foothold. People wanted to believe. And who can say whether they had a legitimate right to or not!

Spirit messages have an implication of the miraculous. Like miracles, they have been the subject of controversy in every age. The incredulous inevitably scoff at those who believe, and label them impractical people. Yet, despite this fact, there have been, and still are, some astute people who credit lay miracles, and who claim we live in an age of them today. Hendrik Willem van Loon, in his preface to the recently issued book, *NBC Symphony Orchestra*, says that he feels "very much inclined to say that never in all history have we lived in a world where miracles were as plentiful as they are this very day." Van Loon cites radio as one of the foremost miracles of our time. But radio you may say is not psychic phenomena! True, but some feel it is not far removed.

Disregarding the pros and cons of psychic phenomena, let us consider the story of

Schumann's ghost and his lost concerto. The tale is an authentic one, vouched for by a number of reliable people, including Sir Donald Francis Tovey. It is not an uninteresting yarn. As a matter of fact, in the language of the cub reporter, it is a perfect set-up — the sort of thing that will provide copy for all writers on Schumann for a long time to come.

It all began in March, 1933. The Hungarian violinists, Jelly d'Aranyi and her sister, Adila Frachiri, together with some friends, were experimenting with a spiritual contraption, similar to the ouija board, in which an inverted glass is set in motion in the middle of the table with an alphabet disposed in a circle around the table. The first message, regarding a lost musical composition, incited no interest, as it came from an unknown "entity". This asked Miss d'Aranyi to hunt up an unknown work of the sender's for the violin. Repetitions of this request came at subsequent sittings. One day, someone asked the name of the sender, and to the surprise of all assembled Robert Schumann identified himself. Interest then was established. And so it came to pass that those assembled made inquiries about the work, and subsequently discovered in Moser's *Life of Joachim* a reference to an unpublished violin concerto by Schumann.

Further spirit messages followed. Then, one day, another famous entity, Schumann's great friend and admirer, Joseph Joachim, the famous violinist, for whom he is said to have written the concerto, came upon the scene. He affirmed the existence of the concerto, and upon being asked where he thought it was, replied that it should be in the Hochschule Museum in Berlin.

Inquiries were made at the Hochschule in the Fall of 1933. Here, it is said, a casual visitor who overheard the request advised the inquirer to try the Prussian State Library — and it was there that the “lost” manuscript was located. After this, a series of spirit messages followed in which the ghost of Robert Schumann is said to have been jubilant, urging Miss d’Aranyi to procure the manuscript or a copy of it. This, however, was not so easy. At first the German authorities were not disposed to allow the manuscript to be copied or the work to be performed.

There were several reasons for this, the main one being a stipulation made by the heirs of Joachim. When the great violinist died in 1907, the manuscript of Schumann’s concerto was among his effects. This manuscript was deposited later by his heirs in the Prussian State Library with the unexplained stipulation that it should not be performed until one hundred years after the composer’s death. As this event would not take place before 1956, the authorities were averse to its performance nineteen years ahead of time. Eventually, however, the whole thing was arranged, and Miss d’Aranyi obtained a copy of the work and set to work to learn it.

The First Performance

Miss d’Aranyi, who is incidentally a grand-niece of Joachim, planned to play the concerto, for the first time in public, last year in England. In August, 1937, it was announced that young Menuhin also had secured performing rights to the composition. But neither Miss d’Aranyi nor Mr. Menuhin was destined to give the first performance of the work. The German Government refused to allow it to be performed anywhere until after it had been played in the country where it was created. Hence, last November, the initial performance of the work was given in Berlin with violinist Georg Kulenkampff and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. There are readers who undoubtedly heard this performance, which was short-waved to this country. Miss d’Aranyi, who was to have played the work for the first time at a B. B. C. Symphony concert in London, had to postpone her performance. Mr. Menuhin played the work for the first time in this country at a Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York concert on December 6, 1937, with John Barbirolli as conductor. It is this performance that Victor has recorded.

This is not a first recording of the work, however, for the German authorities saw to

it that the Berlin performance was transcribed in wax immediately after its first hearing. A German record concern, Telefunken, issued this set.

Thus, it will be noted, it was owing to psychical research that this work was rediscovered and performed. Those who are interested in further and more detailed data regarding this strange occurrence can read of it in a book by Baron Erik Palmstierna, who was the inquirer at the Hochschule regarding the manuscript and one of those present at the various séances. The book is called *Horizons of Immortality*, and is published by Constable and Co., London.

There is a sequel to this story. Last Fall, Sir Donald Tovey, that inimitable writer on music and splendid musician, wrote a long letter to *The London Times*, part of which was quoted by Olin Downes in his article dealing with the concerto in *The New York Times* of December 5, 1937. Expressing his credence in such things as spiritual messages, he ends by stating that “I assert my positive conviction that the spirit of Schumann is inspiring Jelly d’Aranyi’s production of Schumann’s posthumous violin concerto. The sense in which I make this assertion is my private affair, Greenwich Time is up, and you have no more space.”

Critical Estimation of the Work

The general prejudice against spiritualism has undoubtedly provoked some of the bitter critical comment on the work. But, although the adverse criticism is justified in part, for the work is not regarded as one of Schumann’s greatest, nor is it considered worthy to take a place with his piano concerto and his cello concerto, still it does not deserve to be dismissed in a patronizing manner or with critical antagonism. Perhaps it may be said of this work that full appreciation of it can come only with the repeated hearings that are possible with the phonograph. As Mr. Kolodin, that astute young critic of *The New York Sun*, wrote: “Now that the work is finally available for consecutive repetition and study, it may be possible to detach its virtues and failings from the shadows of sentimentality and prejudice which inevitably accompanied its first performance.” We agree with Mr. Kolodin’s observation that it would have been “a more fortunate circumstance had not Menuhin so vehemently expressed his conviction of the work’s greatness, merely allowed his and the music’s eloquence to argue their own case.”

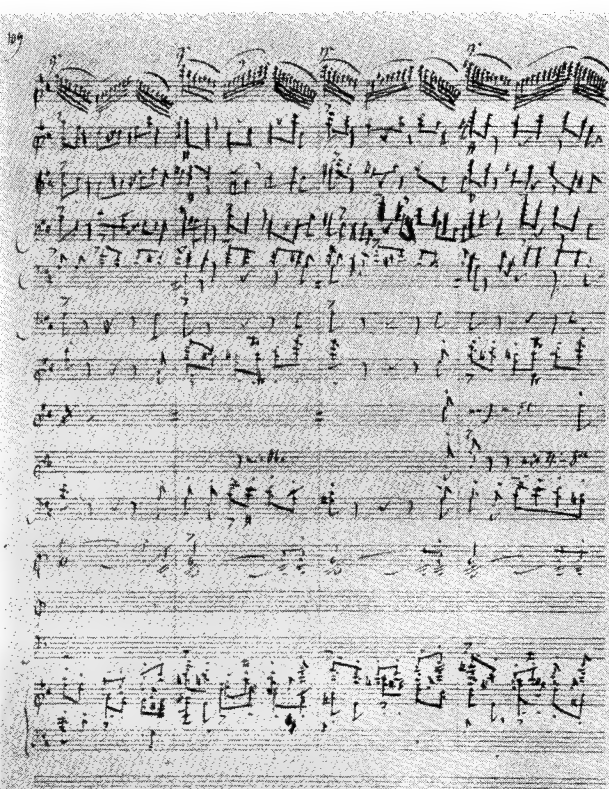
Menuhin is said to have found thematic similarity between the famous Brahms con-

certo and the Schumann work. He is also said to have found in it "really inspired Schumann music, genuine, sorrowful, romantic, mature and lyrical music, such as only Schumann knew how to write." That the young violinist is sincere one can readily believe after listening to his finely molded and deeply felt performance, but no amount of fine playing can retrieve certain inherent weaknesses of this score.

Perhaps the similarity between the Brahms and the Schumann scores can be explained. It is said that on the night of February 17, 1854, Schumann had a dream in which Schubert appeared to him and gave him the E flat major theme which Brahms later used for his piano variations, Opus 23, and also for the slow movement of his violin concerto.

The Concerto's Birth

Nine days after this dream, Schumann was taken to an asylum, and the day following he attempted suicide. This brings us to the history of the concerto, which was begun only the year before his final illness. According to Schumann's diary he wrote the work between September 21 and October 3, 1853. The concerto, written apparently for Joachim, was never played by him in public. Only in private, for Schumann and a group of friends, did Joachim perform it. This was in the Fall of 1853, at which time Schumann is said to have professed disappointment in the effect it produced. That Joachim may have revised the concerto, or worked on its technical shortcomings as he did in the case of Brahms' violin concerto some twenty-five years later, is indicated by a letter he wrote to the composer in 1854, in which he tells Schumann that he now understands the work better and would like to play it for him again. "It sounds much better now," he says, which would definitely indicate that he had done some work on it. It seems strange that Schumann expressed disappointment in the effect the work produced, for, on entering the asylum, he is quoted as exclaiming: "Could I but hear my violin concerto!" After the composer's death, Joachim was reluctant to discuss the work. In a letter to a pupil of his, Andreas Moser, he admitted possessing the manuscript, which he could not speak of without emotion as it was a "product of the last half-year before my dear master and friend became insane."



*Facsimile Page from Schumann's Violin Concerto
(Reproduced by permission of Associated Music
Publishers, New York City)*

The suggestion that Joachim did not think well of the work would seem to be substantiated by the fact that he never played it in public. Schumann's original criticism is said to have had a "profound, though perhaps unconscious, influence" on him.

All of this is interesting in view of subsequent events. Although we hold no brief for or against spiritualism, it should be pointed out that Schumann's desire to hear the work and Joachim's interest in it were most certainly further demonstrated in the spiritual messages. Whether time and space preserved the thoughts of these two men, or whether a series of coinciding circumstances alone controlled the recovery of the manuscript, we will leave it to those who wish to conjecture on the event to decide.

(A review of this work will be found in the Record Notes and Reviews.)

BACH and MOZART - The High Gods

BACH and Mozart have become the high gods with the majority of the musical public today. The public, long bored and exasperated by uncomfortable sounds, the sense of which is seldom apparent, even after repeated hearings, turns with new longing to the past, to find consolation in art-works created under social conditions almost incredibly different from our own. So powerful is this reaction on a great part of the public that it hardly tolerates anything in which there appears a suspicion of the modern spirit.

It is no exaggeration to say that while most of the composers of the present day produce one sort of music, the music-loving public prefers to listen to another sort. Neither in music, throughout its history, nor in any other art, has such a state of affairs arisen before. The characteristic art of every age has corresponded, generally speaking, to the culture of that age, as exemplified by the taste of the public. The musical art of the present day is, most of it, distasteful to the greater part of the public; the appreciation of it, or, I ought to say, the enjoyment, is confined to a small company of experts whose number does not tend to increase with the passage of the years. The gramophone companies will tell you that modern music on records seldom supports itself — statistics show that few modernists, outside of Stravinsky, have found public endorsement. Bach and Mozart, on the other hand, are daily growing stronger with the buyers of records, as well as with the patrons of the concert halls. They, in truth, are the high gods of today.

Atonality

But what, now, is the matter with modern music, that the public finds it so distasteful? The question is easy to answer. Atonality, the *genre omnitonique*, that is the matter with modern music: that, and the persistent employment by composers of the present day of a *vers libre* style, originally engendered by the misinterpretation of Wagner, and most formidably unsuitable to musical expression. A stilted technique of negative expression is being exploited on the foundation of a calculated looseness of form; and the result is being offered to the world as music

which is good and beautiful. We are entitled to doubt if it is music at all.

It is worth while to look into this latter point, of the *vers libre* style, for it has been, without question, the source of much mischief. The Wagnerian mode of construction, with its vastness and its elaboration, was so new and revolutionary in his own day that few of his admirers (let alone those who failed to admire his music) could arrive at a comprehensive grasp of it. They had been brought up on simpler, more obvious things. They appreciated Wagner, as they comprehended him — in detail, and only in detail. The new style of musical construction, of which early examples are to be found in the works of the dramatic composers of thirty or forty years ago, was based upon this piecemeal appreciation of the style of Wagner. The fashion of the minute interweaving of tone-colors (and it might equally well be called the fashion of not seeing the wood for the trees), which is the hall-mark of the modern style, was thus inaugurated; for at the height of the great Wagner cult, and especially towards the close of the last century, the art of Wagner, better loved than understood, had the effect of dissociating musical thought from the older influences.

Wagner's Style

It used to be said at that time that the classical mode of construction (an admissible expression, though liable to mislead), which Lulli and Alessandro Scarlatti introduced, and Mozart and Beethoven perfected, had exhausted itself, and that nothing more could take new birth along those lines. There were but few persons who discerned that the style of Wagner was (apart from its relation to his own character) quite a straightforward and, in fact, inevitable development of classical usage; a development springing naturally from the contact of music with philosophical thought, which contact led in Wagner's case to the application of the symphonic method to opera writing, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the romanticising of polyphony. The rest did not discern these things; and the world of music, applauding the style of Wagner, simply because it was ravished by his idiom, and without even attempting to appreciate his method, began to measure its

own effusions with that implement known to eminent statesmen as a yard-stick, and to you and me as a foot-rule.

At that same time it was beginning to be felt, by such as were at home to the visitations of Euterpe, that everything which the diatonic scale had to say in the way of melody had already been said. It seemed that, with Max Bruch and Humperdinck and such like, you reached the absolute dead-end, where art became completely derivative, and bade fair to degenerate into sheer mawkishness. There seemed a risk of Parnassus becoming suburban. A few years earlier a warning note had been sounded by a great musician. Liszt, a past-master himself of the art of proclaiming emotions which he did not feel, had become conscious of the weediness of his melodic surroundings, and had debated within himself upon a mode of escape. Too old to take advantage, on his own account, of any gap in the thicket, he thought he saw a way out for his successors in the *genre omnitonique*, by which he meant the divorce of melodic design from its familiar key-basis.

The Classic-Romantic Wagner

Superficially viewed, the Wagnerian system of modulation as illustrated so vividly in *Das Rheingold* and *Tristan* (and strictly a system in Wagner's music), seemed to point to this. To the emotional observer Wagner seemed to put his melodies through a churning process. It began to be asserted that omnitonality had to be the essential basis of modern music, because Wagner had destroyed for all time the accepted tonal basis. (Wagner had, of course, done nothing of the sort.) And, as soon as omnitonality was given its head, it gave rise at once to fresh developments as foreign to Wagner and his idiomatic style as the Mongolian languages are to those of the Indo-European group. For omnitonality was no development of the Wagnerian idiom, but something entirely new and untried, a formal and pedantic experiment. Its own immediate and inevitable reactions were twofold. The science of music had hitherto been the handmaiden of the art; omnitonality reversed their positions. And it put Wagner in his place — showed him up as the classic-romantic that he was.

Nobody who had listened to Scriabine could have any further excuse for misinterpreting Wagner.

There remained, however, the *vers libre* illusion. It is not dead even yet.

A Comparison

Anton Rubinstein drew a famous comparison between Handel and Bach, in which he likened Handel's music to a palace, and Bach's music to a cathedral. To me, personally, most of the omnitonal music of the present age suggests a block of offices, and the other music a housebreaker's yard. I can only say that I prefer the housebreaker's yard to the block of offices; the cracked mantelpieces, the dusty fragments of ornamental plaster-work, kindle in me the memory of something which, whatever its deficiencies, had at least some claim to artistic symmetry, and had in some recognizable degree both elegance and form. Whereas, if I may say so (discarding at the same time the figure of speech), the other stuff has merely form without elegance; and that is the final refuge, in every branch of creative art, of those who have endeavored to produce elegance without form.

You may be moved to ask at this point what the writer is driving at through this tangle and torment of abstractions and metaphors. The writer can answer that question quite easily. His object is to show that the one and only true foundation of great music, the sort of music that enslaves us with its beauty and its power, is strong and expressive melody. And it seems to him that the foundation of all strong and expressive melody is, and must be, the major diatonic scale, and its related minor. On any other basis melody becomes, in his estimation, a halting, fumbling, stumbling, indefinite thing, uncertain in its beginnings and its conclusions, unsatisfying to the receptive soul. He goes so far as to say of the moderns, from Debussy onwards, that they are always at their best when they "lapse" into diatonic accents, and usually at their worst when they strive to emancipate themselves therefrom. And to this declaration of faith he dares to add that the diatonic scale evolved itself out of the necessities of melodic eloquence, just because it represented the perfect formula

ad hoc. Like atonality itself, it is as old as musical expression.

Tonic and dominant — that is tune. The most melting, the most alluring, the most pathetic, the most stirring of melodies, boils down to that clear, elementary progression. And it boils down to nothing else. From the simple air of the Tallis canon to the complicated chromatic surge of the Klingsor music in *Parsifal*, all of it walks on that one pair of legs. To attempt, as an experiment, to set music walking on a different pair of legs may be interesting enough, and great genius may succeed in making the experiment interesting to others; but to make a principle of doing this is futile. To speak of the tonic and dominant basis of music as having exhausted itself is absurd; not merely because it has not exhausted itself (as the invention of several brilliant living composers shows clearly), but because it cannot exhaust itself. Our innate sense of music shows this to be so. We cling to this form, not just because all the music of the past two hundred and fifty years has accustomed us to it, but because it renders back to us the sense within us of what music is.

Diatonic Melody

There was never a more preposterous assumption, or one so foreign to clear fact, as that diatonic melody, as the basis of serious and significant music, is dead. And the assumption rests upon the misinterpretation of the most readily understandable of all the greater masters. It was actually thought that Wagner was trying to get away from melody! All he was doing was to harness it to his own ideals and emotions, developing it at the same time structurally as language was developed by the greater poets.

Here lies the root cause of the widespread misunderstanding of his works. If those works had been considered from the outset in comparison with the music of the great tone-poets, such as Bach and Beethoven, the error could hardly have arisen; but instead of Bach and Beethoven it was Rossini and Meyerbeer and Donizetti with whom the world was asked to judge the new master. The consequent mistake is hardly to be wondered at. That which brought the music of Wagner (but too late to prevent the original mistake

from scattering its progeny abroad) into true perspective, was the necessity of securing a sound comparative estimate of his music and that of Brahms; for Brahms amounted to a serious contemporary challenge to the supremacy of Wagner, and had to be valued as such. The controversy harked back to the older masters, of whom Brahms was so clearly the conscious disciple, and at once, as by magic, Wagner slipped into his proper position. We no longer believe that Wagner and Brahms were rivals who played different drums; we see quite plainly that they were rivals who played the same drum. Whence their rivalry!

A Principle of Negation

Omnitonicity and atonality are different species of a common principle. The principle is one of negation. In no age but the present could it have survived the indifference and boredom of the art-loving world. This, for good or evil, is the age of *demos*, the multitude. It is the age, therefore, of suppressed individuality, of triumphant mediocrity. In such an age the forms of art become the hobby of the pedant, which is the only alternative to their becoming the stock-in-trade of the merchant.

Yet out of evil springs good; and in this case the result is one with which we may be well content. We may await with patience the coming of a new succession of melody-makers. In the meanwhile, retreating with aching ears or bitter palate from the harsh tumults and acid odors of our own times, we have plunged into the music of the past with a zest unknown to our fathers. It is no lip service that we pay to Bach and Mozart in these days; they are the foundation, for us, of all that is greatest in music, of all in music that kindles our emotions, takes us most completely out of ourselves, and yet stimulates thought within us, and provides us with an object-lesson of perfect order in a chaotic world. I link the name of Beethoven with those two names; and in the art-work of that supreme triumvirate the Law speaks to me in the accents of beauty and power.

Among the composers of the present day there is at least one who stands in that great succession. Out of consideration for the others who do not stand there I leave it to the reader to identify him.

OVERTONES

TELEFUNKEN, WHICH HAS ISSUED SOME AMAZINGLY lifelike orchestral recordings in the past two years, brings forward a novelty in the contemporary German composer, Kunneke's *Tänzerische Suite*, described as a concerto grosso in five movements for jazz band and full orchestra. The work is played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of the composer.

Telefunken, for those interested, is a leading German recording company. About a year ago this concern brought forward a group of recordings made at Bayreuth, which are in every way excellent. These include selections from *Lohengrin* and *Die Walküre*, with Franz Volker and Maria Mueller as the chief protagonists. Some of Telefunken's unusual issues are a fine violin concerto by Spohr, an excellent recording of Brahms' *Violin Concerto* (both played by the gifted Georg Kulenkampff), an early symphony by Mozart — No. 32 in G major, K. 318, and several new recordings by Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, including his performance of Beethoven's *Fifth*.

These records are all procurable in this country. Your dealer can obtain them for you. If he does not have the address of the importer, we will be glad to supply it to him.

Bizet's ballet suite, *Jeux d'enfants* (*Play of Children*) has been recorded by Dorati and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (HMV discs C2940-1).

Much ballet music has been recorded in England in the past year. Columbia, making use of the ubiquitous London Philharmonic, this time under Walter Goehr, has recorded selections from the Rossini-Respighi score of *La Boutique Fantasque* (Eng. Col. disc DX 848). To those who like this music, but do not wish the entire ballet recording (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), this disc will probably appeal.

English Decca on its discs K-877-8 presents some selections from a Haydn *Singspiel*, *The World on the Moon*. These are

played by an orchestra new to records, the Charles Brill Orchestra.

It is good to find Myra Hess recording again. And it is gratifying to find that she is turning her attention to Schumann, for Miss Hess is one of the foremost living exponents of his music. Recently, HMV issued a recording of the famous piano concerto played by Miss Hess. This past month this was followed by her playing of *Carnaval, Opus 9*, which, in our estimation, has never received adequate representation on records.

Liszt's arrangement of Wagner's *Tannhäuser Overture* has been recorded by Benno Moiseievitch on HMV discs C-3002-03. And Liszt's *Ballade* in B minor has been recorded by Louis Kentner, who is called one of this composer's "most able players" now before the public. (Eng. Col. discs DX 851-2).

Lili Krauss, whose fine work with Simon Goldberg in the Beethoven and Mozart violin and piano sonatas has evoked much praise, can be heard as a soloist in her own right in Schubert's *Sonata in A minor, Opus 143*, on Parlophone-Odeon discs R-20388-90. It is a pity that the American pressings of the Goldberg-Krauss recordings are not to be had on better recording material, for their performances are some of the best extant.

Nadia Boulanger and Dinu Lipatti have recorded Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 14, and 15 of the Brahms four-hand waltzes Opus 39, on a single disc.

Feuermann, the cellist, with Gerald Moore at the piano has recorded Schubert's *Sonata in A minor* (Eng. Col. LX 717-19).

Italian HMV have recorded Puccini's *La Bohème* (complete) with Gigli as Rodolfo. The cast includes the young Italian soprano Licia Albanese as Mimi, Tatiana Menotti as Musetta, Afro Poli as Marcello, Duilio Baroni as Colline, and Aristide Baracchi as Schaunard. Baracchi is the only singer of the cast who appeared in the earlier recording of this opera. The chorus and orchestra of the famous La Scala in Milan is under the

direction of Umberto Berretini. The set comprises thirteen 12-inch discs.

A new recording of Franck's *Prelude, Choral and Fugue* has been issued in Paris. The pianist, new to records, is Mlle. Boutet de Monvel. The recording occupies five sides of HMV discs L 1043, 4 and 5. The last face contains Chopin's *Mazurka in A minor, Opus 13*.

Eide Norena has recorded *With Verdure Clad* from Haydn's *The Creation* (in German) and *Care Selve* from Handel's *Atalanta* (in Italian), HMV disc DB 5054.

Hephzibah and Yehudi Menuhin have recorded the Lekeu *Sonata in G major* (HMV discs DB 3492-6). Lekeu was a young Belgian composer of high promise, a pupil of both Franck and d'Indy, who died of typhoid fever in his twenty-fourth year.

Joseph Benvenuti, the violinist, unites with Etienne Ginot, the pianist, to play Schumann's four pieces for viola and piano, *Märchenbilder, Opus 113* (HMV discs K-3096-7).

Chopin's *Barcarolle, Opus 60*, has been recorded by Alfred Cortot on HMV disc DB 2030.

The Roma Quartet have recorded Malipiero's *Cantari alla Madrigalesca* (HMV discs DB 4512-13).

Correspondence

To the Editor of *The American Music Lover*.

Dear Sir:

Do you not think that something ought to be done about the broadcasting of the NBC Symphony Orchestra before Toscanini comes back? Of course, we are endlessly grateful to have him at all; we get his marvelous rhythm, time, clarity and enhancement of everything he conducts. We are told his orchestra is made up of first class men; but to me the tone is so very disappointing. Is the trouble with the hall, or with the broadcasting technique, or with the orchestra, or with me? The music does not seem to compare with the Sunday broadcasts of the Philharmonic from Carnegie Hall.

I should like to know if you agree with me, and whether, if you do, you think it would do any good for me and others to write to the N. B. C.

Very sincerely yours,

L. D. SYMONDS

Warehouse Point, Conn.

(I most assuredly agree with you, and I sincerely hope that you and others will write to the National Broadcasting Company. The NBC Symphony programs should be broadcast from a place like Carnegie Hall. — Editor)

To the Editor of *The American Music Lover*.

Dear Sir:

I take pleasure in again renewing my subscription to your valued periodical and am looking forward to receiving it again for another year.

Mr. Fletcher's article in the June issue of *The American Music Lover* on the Philharmonic broadcasts was of particular interest to me, since I have been in correspondence with the Columbia Broadcasting System concerning this matter for more than two years. During this time the lack of uniformity in the quality of pickup of these concerts from both the winter and summer series has been apparent and often disappointing.

It would seem that most of the trouble is due to the incompetence on the part of those at the mixing panel. The two chief factors involved are an unbalanced frequency range and lack of balance between the instrumental choirs.

In the case of the frequency balance, the highs are often obliterated while the lows predominate. Especially does this happen when the full orchestra is suddenly brought into play, causing a lack of clarity.

In the case of balance among the choirs, both frequency and dynamic ranges are involved. Much of the time the decibel range is kept so low that the orchestra sounds far away and the wood-winds are scarcely audible. For example, when a Mozart divertimento for strings and two oboes was played recently, the oboes were virtually unheard.

Certainly, the conductor and orchestra are being done an injustice when their art is subjected to such treatment as this and it seems inexcusable in this day of high quality symphony broadcasting and recording that CBS should permit such a condition to exist. What has been said about the Philharmonic applies in a large measure to the current series of Sunday afternoon *Everybody's Music* broadcast — all the more amazing when one considers that these concerts are designed especially for broadcasting and are not picked up from a concert hall performance.

It is not to be denied that engineers must keep in mind the scientific side of music in order to reproduce it properly. However, it is not too much to assume that some of these are guided more by the technical and scientific than by the actual musical and artistic results. The implication here is that the music might be reproduced electrically on dials and meters, but this fact is no indication that it is being aurally reproduced in the same manner. It is no secret that some engineers say Stokowski's pickups are poor, thereby judging them technically; while a trained musician will say that the same broadcasts are superior in quality of transmission and reproduction.

Very respectfully yours,

RICHMOND SEAY, Director

Department of Music and Fine Arts
Blackstone College for Girls

Blackstone, Va. June 16, 1938.

THE LIBRARY SHELF

THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, by Frank Howes. "The Musical Pilgrim Series." Oxford University Press. 108 pp. Price 75 cents.

THE LATER WORKS OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, by Frank Howes. "The Musical Pilgrim Series." Oxford University Press. 85 pp. Price 75 cents

- These two books contain analytical notes on the music of Vaughan Williams not contained in the earlier one, issued in the same series — *An Introduction to the Music of R. Vaughan Williams*, by A. E. F. Dickenson.

Both books are admirably devised. The first deals with four works: the operas *Sir John In Love* and *The Poisoned Kiss*, the music-drama *Riders to the Sea*, and the ballet or masque, as the composer prefers to call it, *Job*.

The second book deals with eight works: *Flos Campi*, a suite for viola, small chorus, and small orchestra; *Benedicite* and *Magnificat*, two short choral works; *Fantasia on Sussex Folk tunes*, for cello; *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Suite for Viola and Orchestra*; *Symphony in F minor*; *Dona Nobis Pacem*, a cantata; and *Five Tudor Portraits*, a choral suite.

Reading about these works, one has a longing to hear them all performed, for they are all the products of one of England's foremost living composers, a man related to his own times but not a revolutionist, a man who knows the "spiritual beauty of Nature," the "eternal romance of spiritual adventure, or the outlook which will give new life to common things." Vaughan Williams has expressed the English national character in his music better than any of his contemporaries. In surveying his music, Howes aptly states that the "predominant impression must be of the fertility and versatility of his (the composer's) mind." The recent release of the composer's *Symphony in F minor* in a recording which has been widely praised, will undoubtedly fill his admirers with a desire to know more about him. These two books and the earlier one mentioned will provide much interesting information, particularly about his music.

DEBUSSY - *Man and Artist*. By Oscar Thompson. Dodd, Mead Company. New York. 395 pp. Price \$3.50.

- One of the most astute and scholarly critics in New York is responsible for this fine book. Oscar Thompson, who is music critic on the *New York Sun* and editor of *Musical America*, has produced here a useful and interesting treatise. Such facts of Debussy's life as are definitely known (and Mr. Thompson seems to have done much original research) are ably presented, while conjectures are clearly indicated as such. The author has many sensible things to say of controversial aspects of the composer's life and art. Especially engrossing are the conclusions he derives from a consideration of the important influences on Debussy's musical style of his literary and artistic environment. The chapter, for example, called "Debussy as Critic," throws much light on the composer's artistic creed.

The lengthy section of the book devoted to Debussy's music will be found illuminating by most music lovers and invaluable by those who have to write on the subject. In fact, we can well imagine it becoming a radio announcer's, as well as a reviewer's, paradise. For here Mr. Thompson presents not only general surveys of the composer's instrumental and vocal style, but also a more or less detailed discussion of all of Debussy's works, composition by composition. There is a full bibliography as well as lists of Debussy's literary and critical works and published correspondence.

The book is attractively gotten up, with easily readable print, and is generously illustrated.

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PALESTRINA, by Henry Coates. The Master Musicians' Series, edited by Eric Blom. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York. 1938. 243 pp. Price \$2.00.

- The little town of Palestrina, situated on an eminence in the Sabine hills not far from Rome, gave its name to a native son who was destined to become one of the world's greatest musicians and thereafter to be known

throughout the world under the name of his birthplace. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (John Peter-Lewis of Palestrina), as he was known in his times, was born in 1524 or 25. During his lifetime he was highly respected and regarded as a great musician. He was a religious composer, not only by personal predilection, but because the foremost musical talents of his time were inevitably associated with the church. He is described as a man of "irreproachable moral character and sound piety."

Mr. Coates points out that "Beethoven's famous saying about finding a 'new road' to take in music is recalled by Palestrina's expressed determination, in the dedicatory preface to his first book of masses, 'to sing the praises of God in a finer manner.' . . . reiterated with even more emphasis in the preface to the second book . . . 'I have essayed to adorn the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with music written in a new style (*modo novorum*) and in accordance with the views of the most serious and religious-minded persons in high places.'"

In his interesting chapter, *Characteristics of Palestrina's Style*, the author states that the composer's liturgical music neither represents his "personal reaction to the emotional idea of the sacred texts nor provides a ready-made emotion for the listener. It has a rarer quality, its aim being to evoke and develop the requisite mood in the worshipper . . . his religious music is to be taken in the same spirit as the work of those medieval architects who built the great churches and the master craftsmen who fashioned lovely ornaments for them, and it may be regarded, in this way, as merely a receptacle for the sacred text upon which all the art of the musical craftsman has been lavished for its adornment."

The religious side of Palestrina's and of Bach's music concerns the listener less today than its musical quality. Although it is not necessary to be religious to enjoy the superb polyphony of either composer, some understanding of the original function of the music and its meaning cannot but increase the listener's appreciation. Palestrina's technical mastery is one of the qualities which have placed him high in the estimation of all musicians and music lovers since his day. As Mr. Coates says in his book, a study of his music "makes one realize that no composer was ever surer of himself . . ."

Mr. Coates' book is a fine scholarly treatise. His critical comments are sound and his independent inferences from biographi-

cal facts are psychologically valid. The editor, Mr. Blom, points out that this is the only book on Palestrina in the English language "that deals with the subject with reference to the latest research." He also points out that the book will awaken and "sustain the trained musician's interest," and it "will not frighten away the general reader who desires to know more about a fascinating musical subject." We concur with these observations.

—P. H. R.

Ravel Recordings

(Continued from Page 79)

Chamber Music

INTRODUCTION ET ALLEGRO - Septet — Ensemble (Victor 9738-9).

TRIO — Merckel, Hirson, Tenroc (Victor M-400).

QUARTET — Pro Arte Quartet (Victor Set M-129).

Instrumental

PIANO CONCERTO 1932 — M. Long and Orchestra (Columbia Set 176).

PIANO CONCERTO (Left Hand Alone) — Blancard - Paris Phil. Orch. (Polydor 5661922-3).

ONDINE — W. Giesecking (Columbia 69020D).

JEUX D'EAUX — Cortot (Victor 7729).

SONATINE — Cortot (Victor 7728-9).

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DEFUNTE — Myra Hess (Columbia 4082M).

LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN — Valmalète (Col. Brunswick 85027-8, 90337).

Vocal

L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE - Opera — Columbia Oper. Set 14).

TROIS CHANSONS — Lyons' Singers (Columbia disc 9136M).

DON QUICHOTTE A DULCINEE — Martial Singher (HMV DA4865-6).

HISTORIES NATURELLES — Elsa Ruhlmann (HMV K-6396-7).

SHEHERAZADE — Marcelle Gerrar (HMV P-790, W-993).

Record Notes and Reviews

Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: *Leonore Overture, No. 2, Op. 72a*; played by the London Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Felix Weingartner. Columbia set X-96, two discs, price \$3.50.

● Of the four Overtures which Beethoven wrote for his opera *Fidelio* (which he always wanted to call *Leonore*) the one which is known as the second was actually the first in order of composition. It was played at the first performance of the opera in Vienna in 1805, but was rewritten because certain members of the orchestra found their parts too difficult, and the composer decided that the overture was too long. His next attempt, the more familiar No. 3, was founded on the same thematic material, but was far more concise and much more dramatically telling. However, it was still too long, and Beethoven made his two more tries before he was satisfied to let the matter rest.

Remembering, as we are forced to do, the tremendous superiority of the *Third Overture*, our interest in the *Second* is naturally of a historical rather than a musical nature. As a human document — a study in the development of musical ideas in the mind of a great composer — it makes an excellent foil to its greater successor.

We are fortunate in having the first recording of this work from Felix Weingartner, who gives it a performance calculated to bring out all the musical value there is in it. Conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, he is given a cleaner job of recording than has always been his lot in Vienna.

—P. M.

LISZT: *Les Préludes*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Eugene Ormandy. Victor set M-453, two discs, price \$4.50.

● Liszt's *Les Préludes* is based on a poem by Lamartine, which, of course, makes it definitely program music. Therefore the

listener is entitled to know something about its literary basis. If such a work as this can be listened to as absolute music, and anyone chooses to do so, that is up to the individual. But, as Ernest Newman, the English critic, has said, if the shaping of the music was "directed by certain pictures in the musician's mind, we get no further than the mere outside of the music unless we are familiar with those pictures." If the program of the music displeases, it is very likely the music will too. That is one of the prime weaknesses of program music.

Of the twelve symphonic poems that Liszt wrote, only this one seems to remain in the standard repertory. True, *Tasso* and *Mazepa* are sometimes played, but that is so seldom that one cannot include them. *Les Préludes* was originally the overture to an uncompleted choral work of Liszt's. This composition was revised at a later date, supplied with an extract from a poem by Lamartine, and introduced to the public as a symphonic poem. The poem, or that part of it used, deals with man's life "as but a series of preludes to the final song of death." Martin Bernstein, in his excellent book *An Introduction to Music*, says: "Examination will show that *Les Préludes* is a well-constructed work which in its musical sufficiency stands in no need of explanation in terms of the now-faded sentiments of Lamartine." It is on this basis that we prefer to listen to the music today, and recommend that others likewise do so. Yet, in line with Mr. Newman's contention, the listener should at least be cognizant of its inspiration, whether that be discarded as superfluous or not. The notes to the set give a translation of Lamartine's lines.

Ormandy, with the aid of one of the greatest orchestras in the world, does notable justice to this music. He stresses its drama, which is too often pompous rather than vital, and extracts the utmost color from his orchestra, which makes for an extremely effective recording. This is unquestionably the finest performance of the work on records, largely owing to the fact that the orchestra

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—P. H. R.

ROSSINI-RESPIGHI: *La Boutique Fantasque*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Eugene Goossens. Victor set M-415, three discs, price \$5.00.

• This music, assembled from various piano pieces of Rossini, was arranged by the late Respighi for a ballet devised by Leonide Massine. After Rossini retired from the musical world and became a farmer, he indulged in writing some sprightly and humorous piano pieces, *Jeux d'Esprit*, to which he attached such amusing titles as *Asthmatic Study*, *Castor Oil*, *Dried Figs*, *Four hors d'oeuvres*, etc. It is from these pieces that Respighi drew the music of *La Boutique Fantasque* (*The Fantastic Toyshop*). The scoring is by turns lively, warmly colored, sentimental, and attractively carefree. It is light music, skillfully conceived and ingeniously orchestrated. Respighi could always be relied upon to create an effective orchestration.

The story of the ballet concerns the activities in a toy shop in the year 1865. Customers of various nationalities come in to look about and buy. The different types of dolls perform different dances, etc. Two dolls that form the doll cabaret are purchased by different buyers, who intend to claim their separate purchases the following day. That night all the dolls come to life. Filled with pity for the doll-lovers, they help them escape. Next day the customers return for their dolls only to find their parcels empty. They seek to wreck the shop, but the dolls again come to life and chase the customers out.

Goossens gives an excellent reading of the score. The recording, made early in 1936, is unusually fine, as good as anything we have had recently of a symphony orchestra. If one does not desire the whole ballet, any one of the three discs will be found to contain some delightful moments.

—P. G.

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia disc 69180D, price \$1.50.

• A number of writers have found it regrettable that *Finlandia* and *Valse Triste* are

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Sibelius' best known compositions, since neither is truly representative, and the admiration bestowed upon them has circumvented recognition of the composer's more notable creations. There is no question that Sibelius' greatest works are his seven symphonies. The tone poems, the shorter pieces, the violin concerto, and the string quartet that have been recorded, have none of the inspirational drive or development which is encountered in the symphonies. Yet, they serve their purpose. More than likely some of these have promoted an interest in the symphonies which would not otherwise have been evidenced.

Finlandia and *Valse Triste* both present the popular side of Sibelius. Their popularity is not confined, however, to the non-musician. Many musicians profess to own an admiration for both works. It is quite evident that Beecham is one of these, for his performance of this familiar work is finely molded. He does not dramatize the solemn paean of the finale, or bring a challenging note to the music as many conductors do; instead he dignifies the whole thing. It is, in our way of thinking, the foremost reading of this composition on records. The recording is most effective.

—P. H. R.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony in B minor (Unfinished)*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set No. 330, three discs, price \$5.00.

● Here is a grand performance of Schubert's *Unfinished*, a performance that shuns an intensification of drama, that concerns itself solely with the songful character of the music. Schubert was a melodist who expressed drama, anguish, sadness, in song. Whereas Koussevitzky, in a recent recording, intensified the music's drama, here Beecham in comparison seems to understate it. As remarkable as the Russian's reading of this work was, however, Beecham's is equally as fine. The depth and mystery of the lyrical beauty of the score are fully revealed by Beecham, who almost presents a brief for the finish of the *Unfinished* as far as records are concerned. The pacing of the slow movement alone, however, might circumvent this. It is a curious commentary on the feelings of conductors that Koussevitzky and Beech-

am's readings of the *Andante con moto* present. Koussevitzky stresses the *con moto*. Beecham leans heavily on the *andante*. Despite this, our admiration of Beecham is unimpaired. The choice between these two sets will rest with the individual listener; but let it be said, whichever set he acquires, he will possess a worthy presentation of one of the greatest songs for orchestra ever written.

The recording here is full-bodied and consistently good.

—P. H. R.

SOUSA (Arr. Hume): *Liberty Bell - March*; and ZIMMERMANN: *Anchors Aweigh - March*; played by Band of H. M. Grenadier Guards, director Major George Miller. Columbia disc 366-M, ten-inch, price 75 cents.

● The band playing here is of the best, and the recording does the organization full justice. The Sousa March is a better piece than its companion, but the spirit of the title is there. It's all a matter of taste, and the best of us like a "hotdog" on occasion rather than a roast beef sandwich.

—P. G.

WELSH FOLK DANCES (arr. Arnold Foster): *Rhif wyth* (or *Figure Eight*); and *The Welsh Reel*; *The First of April*; and *The Dressed Ship*; played by the National Folk Dance Orchestra, under the direction of Arnold Foster. Two Columbia ten-inch discs, Nos. 358-M, 359-M, price 75c each.

● The folk dance movement has been steadily gaining momentum in America over the last few years, and I take it that these records, like the similar selection of English dances issued by Columbia several months ago, are primarily intended for those who take their exercises in that way. As music for simple listening, these little tunes, charming as they are in themselves, are apt to be found rather repetitious and monotonous, but the performances have fine spirit and the requisite liveliness for dancing purposes.

The records bear the seal of approval of the English Folk Dance Society and the orchestra is under the direction of one of the leaders of that group. The recording is satisfactory but not outstanding.

—P. M.

Concerto

PAGANINI-KREISLER: *Concerto No. 1, in D major*; played by Fritz Kreisler with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Victor set M-361, two discs, price \$4.50.

● Mr. Kreisler herewith presents his streamlined version of Paganini's first violin concerto, which is known as the *D major* though it was originally composed in E flat. To be more accurate, perhaps, we really should describe this version as Kreisler's reworking of Wilhelmj's arrangement of the *Concerto*, since the idea of reducing the work to one movement instead of the original three seems to have originated with Mr. Kreisler's celebrated forerunner. It was Wilhelmj, too, who first edited and published the score which Paganini had left in manuscript, and his arrangement remained for many years the standard edition.

In its original three-movement form the *Concerto* has been recorded by Yehudi Menuhin with the Symphony Orchestra of Paris conducted by Pierre Monteux (Victor M-230) and in Wilhelmj's version it may be had on HMV C-2457-58, played by Lazlo Szentgyörgyi with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Clemens Schmalstich. For anyone inclined to make comparisons, therefore, here is a golden opportunity.

Mr. Kreisler has taken a pretty free hand in arranging and orchestrating the work, but I don't suppose there will be much protest from the admirers of this particular composer. Certainly his *Concerto* takes on considerable piquancy as well as modernity in his skillful instrumentation. Whatever the relative merits of Kreisler and the great Paganini as virtuosos, no one will question the superiority of Kreisler as a musician of intelligence and taste.

Though the work is full of dazzling technical display, it is at the same time rich in lyrical and melodious inventiveness. The second theme is one not easily forgotten, and it is a cause for wonder that this melody in itself has not made the *Concerto* more popular. As it is presented here the music is certain to make an instant appeal to those who "know what they like", and for those interested in the violin it affords a generous enough portion of one of the landmarks of the literature of their instrument. I do not think the other movements will be missed.

Kreisler was in good form at the recording session, which was held at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia where the acous-

tics are particularly favorable. The famous orchestra, under Mr. Ormandy, is its own superlative self. —P. M.

PROKOFIEFF: *Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63*, for violin and orchestra; played by Jascha Heifetz and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set M-450, three discs, price \$6.50.

● Prokofieff has gone along for the last twenty years or so steadily producing work after work, without fanfares, without manifestos, and without portentous announcements that he was now entering his third (or eighth) "period". His batting average has been high: if there have been few home runs, there have been, on the other hand, few strike-outs.

The first violin concerto was written in 1917. The present one was completed August 16, 1935. Its first American performance took place in Boston, December 17, 1937. Three days later this recording was made. Despite the long period that separates the two works, they are fundamentally rather similar in mood and outlook. There are in both comparatively little stunt-writing for the solo instrument, a strong feeling for key-relationships, and a lyrical curve and emotional fervor rare in most modern music.

The second concerto opens with a fine subject that promises much. This, together with a more lyrical melody that appears later, supplies the thematic material on which the first movement is based. If the latent climactic possibilities in this material are never completely brought to fruition, the movement is nevertheless extremely interesting for the masterly treatment of the solo violin, the restraint and clarity of the instrumentation, and the complex but unforced harmonic modulations.

The slow movement is deceptively simple, almost Mendelssohnian in style. Above a *pizzicato* accompaniment in the strings, the violin sings a long, beautiful, soaring melody. This is followed by another subject which forms a sort of pendant to the first. After some elaboration and a strongly contrasting middle section, the principal melody with its pendant returns, and there is a coda in which the main theme appears in the lower instruments. This, the best movement of the three, is likely to make the concerto very popular with violinists. It was this movement, the notes inform us, that moved the Boston audience to tears. Well, reviewers, of

course, are notoriously hard-boiled; and this one confesses, reluctantly, that he remained dry-eyed throughout several hearings of the piece. Perhaps the alleged tears were tears of gratitude for a modern composition that could be fully and immediately enjoyed by the average music-lover.

The finale descends from the exalted lyricism of the slow movement to another plane: it is a study in rhythms and sonorities. Like most of Prokofieff's ventures in this sort of thing, it is very clever and repays close technical study. Its appeal to the emotions, however, seems slight.

Mr. Heifetz is said to consider this "one of the five or six great violin concertos". The artist's enthusiasm is understandable. Some of us, perhaps, may not be inclined to rank this work with the Brahms and the Beethoven; but it will undoubtedly prove a most welcome addition to the meager list of important violin concertos.

The performance bids fair to remain a model for all future interpretations of this work. Heifetz's superb fiddling is matched by the playing of the magnificent orchestra, and one presumes that Koussevitzky's incisive and dramatic reading gets everything out of the score that the composer put into it. The recording is splendid.

—N. B.

SCHUMANN: *Violin Concerto in D minor*; played by Yehudi Menuhin and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, John Barbirolli conducting. Victor set M-451, seven sides, price \$7.00.

● The strange history of this work is discussed elsewhere in this issue. Its musical values alone concern us here. We are reminded of Dvorak's *Violin Concerto* upon listening to the first movement of this one; the same inequalities are apparent. Schumann was never happy handling the sonata form. Despite its faltering construction there is a fervor and spaciousness to this work which is never lost. And, it may be, these qualities will be among those which will help establish it as an enduring component of the violin repertory.

The slow movement owns true beauty. It is deeply felt, but one feels Joachim was right when he said that "this blossoming fantasy soon gives way to a morbid brooding and the flow of ideas drags . . ." The finale, *alla Polacca*, is introduced, as Joachim said, "in a spirited manner, but becomes monotonous in the development and

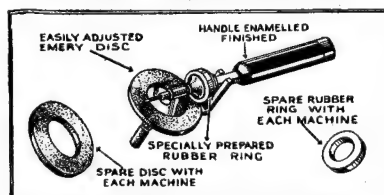
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Menuhin plays this concerto with undisguised fervor. There can be no question that he owns a genuine reverence for the score. Barbirolli, who has been called the ideal concerto conductor, seems intent upon establishing the vitality of the music here to the detriment of a consistently smooth background. On the whole, however, it must be said that he accompanies impressively.

The recording is excellent, even though there are times when the balance between solo violin and orchestra could have been more even.

—P. G.

Chamber Music

DVORAK: *Quartet in F major, Opus 96* ("American"); played by the Roth String Quartet. Columbia set 328, three discs, price \$5.00.

● No one will quarrel with the sponsors' assertion that a new recording of this quartet has long been wanting. Existing sets date back nearly a decade. The work is a popular one, the sort of thing that the chamber music novice might revel in. Broadly sentimental, one is tempted to say full of *schmaltz*, the music is joyous and carefree in the characteristic manner of its composer.

This quartet was composed in 1893, when Dvorak was living in this country. Its thematic material, like that of the *New World Symphony*, owed its origin to a study of certain idiomatic qualities of Negro and Indian music that Dvorak is supposed to have made. A son of the people, he had a predilection for folk tunes, and though his themes in this work and in the symphony are original, they nonetheless have a folk-like flavor. Because of this, the quartet gained the sobriquet, *American*.

This music needs no description. It is easily assimilated. One of the composer's countrymen has pointed out that it is "interesting harmonically on account of its swift and unexpected modulations through related and remote keys." This is true, but one does wish its naiveté were less apparent. The yearning quality of the famous *Largo* of the symphony is apparent in the slow movement here. It has an inescapable depth of sentiment. It has been called a "genuine pearl among Dvorak's lyrical movements." One feels that the performers here agree with that statement for they certainly make the most of it.

The sponsors of this set tell us that the Roth Quartet has "a keen understanding and fondness for this engaging work . . ." We are not inclined to refute this statement. In fact, we would say the Roths revelled in its unabashed sentiment. The recording is good.

—P. G.

MOZART: *Clarinet Quintet in A major, K. 581*; played by Benny Goodman and the Budapest String Quartet. Victor set M-452, three 10-inch and one 12-inch discs, price \$6.50.

● Admirers of Benny Goodman who believe that he is an extraordinary musician are justified in their claims. He is undoubtedly one of the most efficient players, technically, on his chosen instrument now before the public. That he is all-proficient in the performance of current examples of popular music, few will deny. But that he is all-proficient in the playing of the music of the classics not all people will agree.

It is a long leap from the frenzied cacophony of swing to the poised beauty and the serene sensibility of Mozart. The world is enriched by the latter, but only nervously (I nearly said viciously) stimulated by the former. Few people are aware how much the one type of music takes from them, and how much the other contributes. But that is a different subject. To return to Goodman: Let it be said at the outset, he makes the leap from one type to the other creditably. He plays his part of the lovely *Clarinet Quintet* with fine precision and with technical discernment. His phrasing is often extraordinary, the accomplishment of a true virtuoso, and his tonal quality is generally euphonious, if not entirely distinctive or free from occasional blemishes. That he owns none of the tonal sensitivity of Charles Draper — who, in our estimation, with the aid of the Lener String Quartet, contributed the so far unmatched recorded performance of Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet* — is not surprising. After all it is a long leap, as we have stated, from swing music to the music of Mozart, and landing firmly on one's feet is not of necessity landing gracefully.

Mr. Goodman is heard to advantage in the first and last movements; his playing of the slow movement is definitely wanting in feeling.

The Budapest String Quartet plays exceptionally well, but by no means with all of their accustomed warmth. One imagines that this group adopted a virtuoso style to con-

form with the clarinetist's. The remarkable part of the performance is truly the recording. The blending of the instruments has never been better realized on records. This unity will undoubtedly please many. In the Roth Quartet-Bellison set of the work, the character of the recording set-up was more like that of a clarinet concerto than of a chamber music ensemble.

The annotator points out in his notes that the minuet recalls Paderewski's famous piano piece. On the same premise, we can point out that the opening theme of the first movement brings to mind Al Smith's political *leit-motif*, *East Side, West Side*, and several sections of the slow movement bring to mind Chopin's famous *Funeral March*. Perhaps the first and the last may require some stretch of the imagination, but the second is all too apparent. We hasten to assure our readers that we attach no importance to this sort of thing; let the reminiscence-hunters carry on the chase.

Goodman's admirers have reason to be proud of him. Two captions of the sponsors of this set amuse us: "This is not a stunt recording," and "You'll be surprised." We agree with both. Mr. Goodman is in dead

earnest, and his ability to climb the garden wall, to come out of the public lot of frolicsome noise into the quieter precincts of the garden surely surprised us. —P. H. R.

Piano

MOZART: *Sonata No. 14 in C minor*, K. 457; played by Walter Gieseking, pianist. Columbia set No. X-93, two discs, price \$3.25.

• While all the piano sonatas written by Mozart after 1773 or thereabouts are well worth hearing, only a few are great enough to rank with his finest works in other categories. One of the few is the *C minor Sonata*, now recorded for the first time. This composition appears in most editions coupled with the great *Fantasy* in the same key — a coupling that seems to be based on sound precedent, for Mozart himself is said to have suggested it to his publisher.

The sonata was dedicated to a pupil of Mozart's, Therese von Trattner, a lady who seems to have had a respectable technic for those days. For this sonata is by no means easy to play; it is built on broad lines. In

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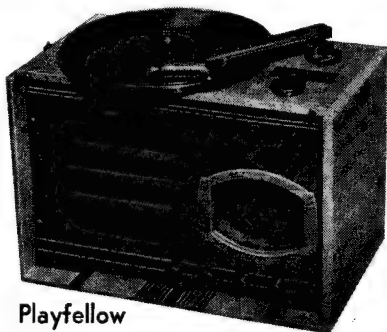
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Abert's opinion the style of the work was influenced by the piano concertos which Mozart composed about the same time; and he points to the brilliant passage-work of the two fast movements, the overflowing melodic decoration of the *Adagio*, the always varied repetitions of a theme, and the employment of all the registers of the 18th-century keyboard as evidence of that influence.

Like most of Mozart's works in a minor key, this sonata is full of deep feeling and dramatic conflict. The dark mood is established at once by the opening theme (which begins exactly like the first subject of the C minor serenade for winds, K. 388), and it is maintained with few interruptions throughout the sonata. The slow movement, in E flat major, does not lighten the atmosphere; it presents another, lyric, aspect of the prevailing pathos. And the finale, with its frequent shifting from one register to another and its sudden outbursts of a hammering motive, intensifies the mood and brings the work to a consistent conclusion.

Gieseking offers a poetic performance. His articulation is clean, his phrasing beautifully molded and delicately colored, and he achieves power and drama with almost no use of the sustaining pedal. The recording is good, though not as good as in a few recent outstanding piano recordings.

—N. B.

CHOPIN: *Scherzo No. 3, in C sharp minor*, Op. 39; played by Simon Barer. Victor disc, No. 14926, price \$2.00.

● The *Scherzi* of Chopin are surely among the most dramatic "jokes" ever perpetrated, and one can hardly help wondering what prompted the composer to label them as such. The third of the four, *Op. 39, in C sharp minor*, is the most forceful and serious of them, and stands with the *Ballades* among Chopin's boldest conceptions. Hunkeler found in this work, with its chorale-like trio and cascading filigree, a bit of liturgical make-believe, but we may, of course, read into it any meaning we choose. No interpretation can alter the fact that this is potent and fascinating music.

This is music, too, which requires the utmost mastery on the part of its performer, and for just what it needs I suppose that Simon Barer has few equals in the world today. Here is a pianist with a magnificent technique subordinated to a musical will and imagination of the highest type. I do not know

how he would stand as an exponent of the classical school, but in the music of the romantics he is superb. In his hands the great difficulties of this *Scherzo* melt into musical expression, and its tempestuousness becomes, as it should, poetry. Happily he has been given excellent recording. Of the several other available versions of this *Scherzo* only that of Arthur Rubinstein in the complete set of the *Scherzi* (Victor M-189) would seem to require consideration. For those who are content without the other three, this disc can be heartily recommended.

—P. M.

Organ

BACH: *Chorale-Prelude: Fervent is my Longing* (*Herzlich thut mich Verlangen*); *Air* (*From Suite No. 3, in D*) (Arr. Courboin); played by Charles M. Courboin on the Grand Court Organ, Wanamaker's, Philadelphia. Victor disc, No. 14927, price \$2.00.

● This is not so much a record for lovers of Bach as one for those who enjoy a large movie organ — for that in effect is what the Wanamaker organ is. That, too, is the influence under which Dr. Courboin plays today. Arguments can be advanced, of course, about the popularizing of Bach, but I doubt if such a record will have great missionary value. Courboin's conception of the very beautiful *Chorale-Prelude, Herzlich thut mich Verlangen*, is beset with tremolo and swell-pedal, and his transcription of the famous orchestral *Air* (popularly though wrongly associated with the G string) has neither the requisite clarity nor the serenity which is its very essence. The Courboin records are all among the most disappointing organ discs ever made.

—P. M.

Instrumental

BACH: *Suite for Violoncello (unaccompanied) No. 4 in E flat major*; played by Iwan d'Archambeau. Musicraft Album No. 19, two discs, price \$3.50.

● The intrepid Musicraft Company presents the first complete recording of one of Bach's suites for unaccompanied cello. This is a courageous venture because the suites for cello solo pose difficult problems to listeners as well as players. These compositions offer little in the way of sensuous appeal; their effectiveness is principally determined by the ability of the listener to perceive the qualities of genius that enabled Bach to transcend the limitations of an instrument so restricted

in its capabilities and to erect complete musical structures involving hidden, complex harmonic progressions and counterpoint. The player needs a thorough command of style and a finished technic to convey these things and to avoid the monotony that usually blights performances of this music.

Mr. d'Archambeau, the excellent cellist of the Stradivarius Quartet, and formerly of the Flonzaley Quartet, gives a sound, musicianly performance. His tone, however, seems rather dry in this recording and of a limited range of color. —N. B.

FALLA: *Asturiana* (from *Suite Populaire Espagnole*) (arr. Kochanski); KODALY: *Il pleut dans la Ville* (Op. 11, No. 3) (arr. Milstein); MOUSSORGSKY: *La Couturiere* (The Seamstress) (arr. Milstein); played by Nathan Milstein, with piano accompaniments by Leopold Mittman. Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 17111-D, price \$1.00.

• Mr. Milstein's latest disc is made up of transcriptions, featuring the music of three distinguished nationalists. The best known of the three pieces presented is undoubtedly Falla's *Asturiana*, which is taken from the *Seven Spanish Popular Songs*, though it is frequently played in Kochanski's transcription for violin and piano. Mr. Milstein's fiddle sings its meditative and haunting melody cleanly but expressively.

For the Hungarian portion of the disc we have Kodaly's piano piece, *Il pleut dans la Ville* — which may have been written with Verlaine's somewhat similarly named poem in mind. Taken from the seven pieces which make up this composer's Op. 11, it is a quietly effective bit of melodious music, and it comes off well in transcription. Moussorgsky's *La Couturiere* was also originally a piano piece, but it makes effective violin display, and its rapidly moving passages are in marked contrast to its companions.

None of this is heavy-weight music, but it is all attractive in its way, and will unquestionably appeal to admirers of Milstein's skillful playing. The accompaniments of Leopold Mittman are as good as usual, and the recording is excellent. —P. M.

HAYDN: *Scherzo* (from *Quartet No. 41*); MENDELSSOHN: *Agitato* (both arr. Meyet); played by a Saxophone Quartet (members of La Garde Republicaine). Columbia 10-inch disc, No. 364-M, price 75 cents.

COLUMBIA

Features

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• AMERICAN SONG ALBUM, The Madrigal Singers conducted by Lehman Engel.

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COLUMBIA
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● Columbia is gradually building up a repertoire of saxophone quartet transcriptions which includes the works of composers who would be more than amazed to find their music in such a list. Of course there should be no work for a quartet of saxophones if it were not for such transcriptions, so if you like the instrument in "serious" moods, these are the records for you.

As a matter of fact, if the sweetness of the saxophone tone does not cloy, the music is not hard to take this way. The quartet plays with a fine precision and balance which would do honor to any string ensemble, and the compositions sound by no means unidiomatic. The Haydn *Scherzo*, from his *Quartet*, Op. 33, No. 5, in G, is happy and graceful—always well worth hearing for its own sake. It is played here with as much finesse as is possible to its present medium.

It is an interesting commentary on Mendelssohn as the absolute musician that his *Agitato* sounds really quite at home in its new dress. On first playing I naturally supposed that it came from one of his quartets; although I could not place it it sounded quite familiar. It was, therefore, a surprise to locate it among the *Songs Without Words*, Op. 30, No. 4. There is nothing specifically pianistic about it, and it sounds quite as well played as it is in this recording as in the original.

The reproduction meets the high standard of the earlier releases in this series.

—P. M.

Vocal

AMERICAN SONG ALBUM: *Lilly Dale*; *Lubly Fan*; *Cocaine Lil*; *Listen to the Mocking Bird*; *Oh! Suzanna*; *Civil and Revolutionary War Songs*; sung by The Madrigal Singers, conducted by Lehman Engel, with Everett Roudenbush at the piano. Columbia set 329, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

● Columbia celebrates the Fourth of July with an album of assorted American songs done by Lehman Engel's Madrigal Singers in a holiday mood. Naturally the collection is a somewhat miscellaneous one, for it comprises songs ranging from colonial hymn tunes to such a bar-room favorite as *Cocaine Lil*. Taken all in all, I suppose it includes most of the vocal types which can most safely be described as American. Some of them—such as the hymn tunes—have more than a passing musical interest, while others are far more amusing than rewarding. Mr. Engel has provided a booklet giving historical notes about the individual songs and their

composers, which draws the collection together into a more or less unified whole.

To the first period of our history belong *Bradford*, Sumner's *Ode to Science*, *The American Hero*, *Chester*, *Brave Wolfe* and *Old Colony Times*. These, by all odds, are the most valuable part of the set. Inevitably under foreign influences, our earliest composers had a certain solidity and a kind of severe dignity which characterized not only their lives but their music as well. The texts of these pieces have their quaint moments, but are not devoid of literary value.

Passing onto the middle of the last century, we find the songs even more naive, but lacking in the traits which gave the earlier works their quality. Not much can be said for *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* or *Marching Through Georgia* beyond that they are spirited and catchy. It is only their established and traditional familiarity which keeps us from realizing how slight their significance actually is. *The Loved Ones* is a priceless bit of sentimentality surpassed only by *Lilly Dale* and *Listen to the Mocking Bird*. *The Burnham Lover* is a somewhat healthier product. *Lubly Fan Will you Cum out Tonight* is better known in its later version as *Buffalo Gals*, a minstrel song which held its popularity for many years. The famous *Oh! Suzanna* was an inevitable inclusion, showing the less frequently emphasized side of Stephen Foster. *Cocaine Lil* in Joseph Clokey's harmonization is possibly not quite in keeping with the rest of the collection, but on its own merits it is one of the best things in the set.

It goes without saying that this music is less exacting than any of the other things which the Madrigal Singers have recorded. It is also true that this type of program is apt to prove too much for sophisticated singers. I have no complaint to make here on the latter score. The solo voices have not made the mistake of taking their parts too seriously, but have sung in an open and honest manner. Whenever necessary, Mr. Everett Roudenbush has provided those inimitable piano "symphonies" which are practically the making of *Lilly Dale* and *Lubly Fan*. The recording is not consistently transparent, nor is the choral singing at all times as crystalline as it might be. The old familiar melody of *The Loved Ones*, for example, being hidden away in the tenor part, will probably pass unnoticed by those who are not so fortunate as to know it already. The diction of the group also leaves something to be desired, and the singers' familiar habit of chop-

ping the end of phrases is once more in evidence. However, in *Oh! Suzanna* and *Listen to the Mocking Bird* it seems to me that the singers have caught just the right spirit. In the latter a little verse-arranging has been done, which disconnects the rhyme scheme, but the refrain could hardly be more simply and sincerely done. —P. M.

KNIPPER: *Song of the Plains* (arr. Alexandroff); FOLK SONG: *The White Whirlwind* (arr. Alexandroff); sung by the Choir of the Red Army of the U. S. S. R., directed by A. V. Alexandroff. Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 4204-M, price \$1.00.

• This disc is one of a series of recordings made last year at the Paris International Exposition, where the Russian Army Chorus was one of the great musical hits. It has especial interest as a more or less official artistic expression coming from the Soviet Union. There are said to be 120 voices in this superbly trained choir, and they sing with far more genuine and exciting spirit than is usually the case with such an organization.

The songs have the authentic Russian folk-song flavor. In *The Song of the Plains* this flavor is enhanced by a cornet *obligato* skillfully played by M. K. Lemechko and a constant accompaniment of horses' hoofs. The *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of advancing and retreating men is excellently realized. For atmosphere the performance is unbeatable. Equally thrilling is *The White Whirlwind* with its tune bearing a strong family resemblance to the good old *Red Sarafan*. The tenor solo of M. Pankow is well in keeping, and the recording is wonderfully spacious and lifelike. No apologies of any kind are needed for this record. —P. M.

RACHMANINOFF: *Aleko: The Moon is High in the Sky*; MASSENET: *Elégie*; sung by Feodor Chaliapin, basso, with orchestra conducted by Lawrence Collingwood in the former, and piano accompaniment by Ivor Newton and cello *obligato* by Cedric Sharpe in the latter. Victor disc, No. 14902, price \$2.00.

• This is a recoupling of two not particularly new recordings issued at this time as a memorial to the great Chaliapin. Both appear for the first time with the American

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(Continued on Page 107)

label, though the *Elégie* was once promised by Victor with its original partner (Rubinstein's *Persian Love Song*).

Rachmaninoff's one-act opera *Aleko* was first produced in Moscow in 1892. Based upon a poem of Poushkin, the libretto tells the story of a young man who joins a gypsy tribe because he is tired of his own mode of life. He falls in love with the daughter of the old leader of the band, but she proves false, and he kills her with her lover. The *cavatina* which Chaliapin has sung for us is *Aleko's* meditation on the falseness of his mistress. At once melodious and dramatic, this was music particularly suited to the style of the great basso. The voice is at its rich and full best in this recording, and the singer again proves his power to impart vitality and atmosphere to his interpretation and to transmit these things with an inescapable thrill to those of us to whom Russian is a closed book. The orchestration of Rachmaninoff is, as might be expected, rich and colorful, and it is only in its reproduction that we realize that this is not strictly an up-to-the-minute recording.

Chaliapin's art was a highly personalized one, and his singing of such songs as Massenet's *Elégie* was, to say the least, as distinctive as that of his Russian opera arias. His interpretation is more Chaliapin than Massenet, but it has a certain eloquence that it usually lacks in the conventional French performance. Not only the words, but the music has been translated into Russian. Both the cello of Cedric Sharpe and the piano of Ivor Newton are well played, and the balance is good.

—P. M.

RUSSIAN POPULAR SONGS: *Bublitchki; Tchastushki*; sung by Liuba Vesiolaya, with orchestra. Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 362-M, price 75 cents.

● Though the labels call these two selections folksongs, they are in reality quite modern, and should more properly be classed as popular songs. Both belong, I am told, to post-revolutionary times, though by now they are probably what would be called "standard" in the American terminology. *Bublitchki*, the song of the vendor of a kind of Russian doughnut, has political significance, and early in the present regime was barred from the stage of the Soviet Union. I do not know whether or not the song has as yet been in any way exonerated. In any case it enjoyed at one time a great vogue among the peasants and workers. *Tchastushki* is a sort

of nonsense jingle which probably also conceals some deep and subtle meaning.

Liuba Vesiolaya, who performs these not very refined songs, is not a singer of refinement. She has, however, just about what the music needs, and she sings quite unashamedly in a raucous chest voice. To listeners to whom the words are intelligible, and to whom the implications of the text mean something, I imagine the record will make an appeal, but I doubt if it will have a larger audience. The accompanying orchestra is no more delicate than the singer, and the recording is adequate.

—P. M.

RONALD: *Oh Lovely Night*; ROGERS: *At Parting*; sung by Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, with piano accompaniment by Edwin McArthur. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1890, price \$1.50.

● I doubt if even Mme. Flagstad's warmest admirers could find very enthusiastic praise for her taste in English songs — or that of her advisers, who seem to have done their best to keep her from knowing that any good ones exist.

The voice as we have it on this new disc meets her general recording standard, but there is not much more of conviction or spirit than there is of musical value in the songs. Mr. McArthur's accompaniments, as usual, are rather reticent and colorless.

—P. M.

BALL: *Mother Machree*; DEL RIEGO: *The Green Hills of Ireland*; sung by Richard Crooks, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret and piano accompaniment by Frederick Schauwecker, respectively. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1805, price \$1.50.

● Richard Crooks has been taking over the old McCormack song repertoire, and it must be admitted that he is preeminently fitted to do so. He may not be able quite to duplicate the sincerity and genuine Irishness of his famous predecessor, but he has the good sense to sing solidly and unaffectedly. There will be many, naturally, for years to come, who will prefer McCormack's *Mother Machree*, and I am not sure that Crooks has any advantage other than that of the newer recording. *The Green Hills of Ireland* is essentially a better song, though hardly a masterpiece, and here Mr. Crooks has no such rivalry to overcome.

—P. M.

GERSHWIN: *King of Rhythm*, Selections —
The Man I Love; Do Do Do; My One and Only; and S' Wonderful; played by Carroll Gibbons and his Orchestra with Christopher Stone, and Larry Adler (mouth organ), coupled with *Half of It Dearie; Blues; Fascinating Rhythm; Sweet and Low Down; The Man I Love*; by Gibbons; Hildegard; Christopher Stone; with extracts of records by George Gershwin and Fred Astaire. (Disc 69193).

GERSHWIN: *Porgy and Bess*, Selections —
Summertime; Bess, You Is My Woman; It Aint Necessarily So; I Got Plenty of Nuttin'; There's a Boat; by Gibbons and his Orchestra with vocals by Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth. (Disc 69194). Both discs in Columbia set X-95, price \$3.25.

● These records are a unique tribute (coming as they do from England) to George Gershwin, that popular American composer, who could turn a melody like no one else in the field, and who certainly earned the right to be called the King of Rhythm.

It is good to hear Christopher Stone of *The Gramophone* say: "This appreciation must not dwell on the unhappiness of Gershwin's untimely passing, but rather on the great happiness he gave to us all with that wonderful series of musical comedies in the latter 'twenties. Only Gershwin knew how to capture the bitter sweetness of those Post War years" And, it is good to hear Larry Adler say a word also, but we wonder whether these kindly tributes will not circumvent lasting appreciation of the records. There is an element of novelty about this first disc, with its music, its commentaries, and its dubbing of a Gershwin record, which may not wear so well. However, it should be said the whole thing has been effectively planned and released. It's the sort of thing that all Gershwin admirers should hear at least once.

The *Porgy and Bess* disc has no talking. It will appeal to those who do not own the album set. The soloists are both first rate, if a bit too English for the good of the characterizations (one cannot imagine West Indians in the roles of Porgy and Bess, and the singers suggest Jamaicans rather than Charlestonians). But Anne Ziegler has a lovely voice, and both she and her partner are to be commended on their diction. Gibbons provides full, rich orchestral backgrounds, and the recording does justice to the whole thing.

—P. G.

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(Continued from Page 105)

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(Continued on Page 109)

Swing Music Notes

Enzo Archetti

● THIS MONTH WE WILL LOSE NO TIME IN getting down to discussing some very interesting new swing releases which represent some of the finest work of that type as well as something off the usual well-worn commercial trail.

Serenade to a Shylock (Pee Wee Russell)

Embraceable You (George and Ira Gershwin), played by Jack Teagarden, trombone; Bud Freeman, tenor sax; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Jess Stacey, piano; Bobby Hackett, cornet; Eddie Condon, guitar; George Wettling, drums; Artie Shapiro, bass. Vocal on the first side is by Jack Teagarden. Commodore 1501, price \$1.50.

This is the second twelve-inch Commodore record to be issued. It also has the general title of *Jam Session at Commodore, No. 2*. Note that it differs in personnel from the first in that Jack Teagarden replaces George Brunies on trombone. The change is a distinct improvement.

If the first *Jam Session* was excellent in every respect, this one is certainly no less so. Of the two, this second release is decidedly the more interesting because the music is better in quality. The *Serenade* is a traditional twelve bar Negro blues. You've heard it before — or something very much like it. Jack Teagarden fits words to it which are almost as traditional as the blues itself:

O, Mama, Mama, Mama, where did you stay last night?

O, Mama, Mama, Mama, where did you stay last night?

For the last I saw you, you had the look just right.

The label credits Pee Wee Russell as the composer. The truth of the matter is that he had no more to do with it than the other musicians on the disc. His solos are slightly more prominent, which puts him a little bit more in the limelight. So it was decided to give him the credit. Then, when the session was over, there was still the matter of a title to be decided. Pee Wee had had some very unpleasant doings with a Shylock that very day, a Shylock in the strictest Shakespearian sense of the name, and Pee Wee's share from this session was destined to satisfy his de-

mands. So, in a sense, this music was a serenade to or for that Shylock. Hence, that title was selected.

The music as a whole is a splendidly conceived series of variations on the traditional blues. It opens with Jess Stacey playing a beautifully poised, rocking introduction which is slightly reminiscent of *Gin Mill Blues*. A break; then a full chorus by Pee Wee Russell in which he plays with extraordinary feeling. Jack Teagarden follows with a fine vocal in the strict blues manner (T. is an old hand at this), with Pee Wee and Jess inserting a comment here and there on their instruments during the pauses. Then a chorus on trombone by Teagarden in the best Teagarden manner. Bud Freeman follows with a very modest chorus: neat, and in good taste. It fits the mood perfectly. In fact, the chorus is so modestly toned that for a moment one doubts it is Bud. But the familiar phrasing is there. Bobby Hackett's cornet takes the next chorus in exactly the same vein. So far there hasn't been the slightest suggestion of exhibitionism. The music's the thing. Then — a break. Wettling sets a scat tempo and there is an all-in section. The finale is brought in on the original tempo with Pee Wee taking the lead. His clarinet becomes rather raucous. He plays so close to the microphone that his breathing sounds like grunting. This is the only flaw in an otherwise perfect disc of excellent jazz.

Embraceable You is a beautiful Gershwin tune. Here it is played fairly straight. The music is allowed to speak for itself. A medium-fast tempo permits each soloist to think out his part carefully. Bud leads with a fine chorus. He has a smooth, warm, singing tone, which is rare indeed for him. Teagarden on trombone follows in much the same manner. Behind both these solos the orchestra lays a soft pattern of held notes, smooth and quiet so that each man's variation shines out against it. Against this background Pee Wee plays a moving chorus, subtly supported by Jess Stacey. There is an exciting *lift* to the piano playing. Bobby Hackett takes an equally discreet chorus but for him the others provide a soft scat background. The disc finishes with an all-in and a final punctuation mark by Eddie Condon. Nowhere in the entire side does Jess Stacey take a solo but his playing is remarkable through it all. On the whole, a beautiful example of soft swing.

Diane (Erno Rapee and Lee Pollack)

Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland (Friedman and Whitson)

The first played by Jack Teagarden and his trombone (personnel the same as in the above mentioned *Jam Session* record) and the second by Eddie Condon and his Windy City Seven (see previous reviews for personnel of this group, except that Jack Teagarden replaces George Brunies). Commodore 505, price \$1.00.

The two groups are exactly the same but because Jack T. takes the lead and holds most of the important solos in *Diane* it was decided to give him special label credit. However, he deserves more than label credit because every note he plays is a gem. A short introduction by Jess Stacey leads Jack in for the first solo — a beautifully toned, admirably paced variation which wanders very little from the original tune. Only Jess accompanies him. Bud glides in with a smooth chorus immediately after, with only Jess backing him. Wettling joins in very discreetly. He is barely audible. Only his pulse can be felt. Then a cornet-clarinet-sax-trombone quartet still in the same soft vein leading into the finale which is left to Teagarden's singing trombone. Ten inches of nicely proportioned, smooth swing.

Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland is at the opposite pole of swing music. It opens with a terrific solo on drums by Wettling which sets a very fast pace. Immediately there is a free for all with each member riding out his own ideas. Teagarden's trombone sticks out a trifle prominently as does Pee Wee's very hot and raucous tone. Both Jess and Bud make themselves heard. The final all-in is loud and hot, with Pee Wee standing out very sharply. Through it all the tune retains its original semblance remarkably well. Not the best kind of swing but very exciting just the same.

So far, Commodore has not issued a single dud. Though the relative merits of the music and performances vary considerably, all of the seven records are stamped with a feeling of sincerity which suggests that they were made because the musicians felt like making them and not because they had to fulfill any contract or satisfy any particular public.

On June 26, the *Saturday Night Swing Session* celebrated its second anniversary on the air with a gala broadcast lasting for an hour and a half during which an excellent array of artists took part Following their engagement at the Cotton Club, New York, Duke Ellington and his orchestra played a week's engagement at the Harlem Apollo. Ellington underwent a minor operation immediately afterward and now the

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(Continued from Page 107)

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band is on the road until the Fall season Harry Jones, the swing pianist, is now at the newly opened Turf Club, Hudson Boulevard, West New York, N. J., where he is drawing a crowd and building up a large following George Wettling will shortly return to Bunny Berigan as drummer. Joe Bushkin has already joined him as a pianist Bobby Hackett is playing at Nick's Following an act of *lèse-majesté* during an indiscreet moment, George Brunies, trombone, was given his walking papers from Nick's Count Basie and his orchestra open at the Famous Door shortly The riotous outcome of the Swing Carnival at Randall's Stadium evidently did not scare Benny Goodman. He gave a carnival of his own, assisted by Count Basie, at Madison Square Garden on June 13, which was almost as riotous A novel based on swing music written by Tommy Dorsey and George D. Lottman, *Love in Swingtime* is now appearing serially in the *New York Journal-American* *Young Man with a Horn* by Dorothy Baker is a new novel which has just appeared. It is based on the life of Bix Beiderbecke. During the first week in July the magazine *Life* will run a special swing number with this book as the central theme.

Record Collectors' Corner

Julian Morton Moses

De Gustibus

QUITE A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT SEEMS TO HAVE arisen in the English record magazine, *The Gramophone*, over the temerity of one of its readers in naming his selection of the six greatest tenors in the world. He made a highly individual choice and thereby let himself in for a pack of refutations, not the least eloquent of which (I hope) follows. Anyone can say I like this and thus settle the matter of his personal taste, hence the oft-quoted Latin proverb prefacing this column, which in toto means "concerning taste, there can be no argument".

Just what criteria the readers of *The Gramophone* used is hard to imagine. The only test for great singing is consistency. When a domestic tenor sings the *Esultate* so well in a performance that comparison with Tamagno is made, it is one thing. But when the rendition is such an effort that nothing thereafter from the same man's throat is audible, that can hardly be termed great singing. No, we must ask that, within the bounds of individual characteristics (and a perfect voice has never existed), each note be what we expect and each performance, week after week, year after year, be likewise.

Mme. Cigna, when she made her triumphant entry into the Metropolitan, revealed in parts of her *Gioconda* and her *Norma* performances an excellence beyond even the standard set by Rosa Ponselle, whom she ostensibly replaced. But, at the same time, she equalled in neither of these roles the consistent greatness of her predecessor.

So with some of the men singers recently added to the roster. Half of these are inaudible beyond the fourth row, the other half incapable of a sustained tone without amplification. On the other hand, we have had Martinelli for over twenty-five years, always phrasing with the majesty of true musical inflection, enthusiasm, and good taste. Even when, after the rigors of a strenuous role, he has upon occasion lost some of his high notes rather than breathe in the wrong place, he has maintained his high standard as a singer. Recording engineers

can do a great deal, but they cannot breathe for an artist. Listen to Martinelli's recording of *O fatal pietra* and *Ah, Matilda*, if you would be reminded of him at his best.

Gigli too was luscious beyond anything now to be experienced; listen to his *Mignon* arias or his singing in the *Pearl Fishers* duet, and, for a beauty of tone never equalled by Caruso, his *Loreley* recording. Lauri-Volpi, on a slightly lower level, was not as consistently great, but though he strove too much for effect he enjoyed wondrous top-notes, the like of which are given to few tenors. Listen to his recording of *A te cara, Schipa* (like Martinelli) was best in person. At his debut in *L'Elisir d'Amore* he was first lost amid the chorus, then coming out for *Quant'e bella*, he equalled a Bonci in restrained style, and with a much smaller voice than Martinelli he could hold his own against him, Kullman and Raynor put together.

Of the greatness of these singers, the critics have given us little idea. The attitude seems to be that artistic interests must not be permitted to eclipse the monetary benefit derived from present practices.

When it comes to recordings, one can safely say that those of the really great singers have always taken precedence over all others. And it is the dearth of good singers today that has recreated the interest in the records of the past.

Featured among the three re-pressings offered this month by the International Collectors' Club is a 12-inch record, No. 125, price \$2.25, coupling two of the most sought-after records of Emma Eames. Dating from 1905 and 1906 respectively, they are two songs, Hahn's *L'Incrédule* and Mrs. Beach's *The Year's at the Spring*, and the *Ave Maria* from Verdi's *Otello*. The operatic aria represents the singer in a famous role to which she lent distinction amid stars of the first magnitude. It is beautifully sung as are the two charming pieces on the reverse face.

Two most unusual 10³/₄ inch Odeon discs, price \$2.00 each, complete the group now available to avid collectors: *Herodiade, Il est doux* sung by Ada Adina and *Si j'avais vos ailes* (Messenger) sung by Aino Ackté, plus the grand aria from *La Dame Blanche* (Boieldieu) sung by Edmond Clement and *A Year Ago* (d'Hardelot) sung by Victor Maurel.

The Historic Record Society promises a new Ellen Beach Yaw disc of unpublished items. We have not received their issues as yet.

In the Popular Vein

Horace Van Norman

Standard Popular

AAAA—*Now It Can Be Told*, and *My Walking Stick*. Ray Noble and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8153.

● These are two of the long-awaited tunes from the forthcoming Irving Berlin picture, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Highly touted in preview by the wiseacres as the outstanding musical film of the year, much more than usual interest attaches to its score. With Mr. Berlin, unquestionably the outstanding figure in American popular music, making but one film a year, this is bound to be the case.

Now It Can Be Told is in the vein of golden sentimental melody that is Berlin's priceless gift to an unhappy world. The miracle of a musically illiterate little man who plays everything in the key of G flat turning out more and better tunes, year after year, than almost any half-dozen of his better-schooled confrères is one that never loses it glamor. *Now It Can Be Told* is typical of the sort of tune that has brought Berlin his greatest popularity. Noble, always a kindred spirit of Berlin's, does an extremely neat job on it. A thoroughly sincere, heartfelt rendering of an outstanding tune, it is distinguished by Tony Martin's vocal, one which actually justifies the use of the word "vocal". *My Walking Stick* is more commonplace as a number, but Noble does a dazzling performance of it.

AAA—*When They Played the Polka*, and *There's Rain In My Eyes*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Victor 25859.

● *When They Played the Polka* has a Continental lilt that is ideally well suited to the talents of our Continental Lilt Man No. 1, Leo Reisman. In fact, no other American bandsman can so imbue thoroughly American rhythms with that kind of schmaltzy treatment that we regard as being typically Viennese. When such former standbys "on the sentimental side" as Eddy Duchin and Emery Deutsch have gone more or less completely over into the swing camp, it is rather refreshing to know that at least one man who

can play sweet music supremely well is continuing to do just that, instead of vainly attempting to out-Goodman Goodman.

AAA—*Music, Maestro, Please*, and *All Through the Night*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25866.

● First-rate sob stuff is *Music, Maestro, Please*. To think of how many café songsters and songstresses and assorted radio warblers will eventually pour forth this sad, sad song before its course is run staggers the imagination. Dorsey does, as invariably in numbers of this sort, a completely satisfactory job, songful but rhythmic. *All Through the Night* is not Cole Porter's ace song of a few seasons back, but the old Welsh tune of the same title and its fox-trotted version here seems a pointless and annoying business, even when done tastefully, as it is here. When are the boys going to get tired of raiding the classics and folk music (or, it might be more pertinent to ask, when is the public going to get tired of it)? Soon, I believe.

AAA—*Where In the World*, and *In Any Language*. Hal Kemp and his Orchestra. Victor 25855.

● These are slick, undistinguished Gordon and Revel tunes from the film *Josette*, and are given appropriately slick, if not entirely undistinguished treatment by Kemp and his excellent band. No other writers turn out these sure-fire mediocrities with the assurance of the portly Gordon and his tune car-penter, Revel, and no band seems as well qualified to record them as the pleasantly mediocre Kemp and his able bandmen.

Hot Jazz

AAAA—*The Flat Foot Floogee*, and *Big John Special*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25871.

● *Flat Foot Floogee* is a crazy thing that was started by a couple of wacky colored lads in some ultra-unfashionable hot spot and seems about to duplicate the career of *The Music Goes 'Round and Around*, which got its start in much the same manner. The funny part of it is that in no version, not even in this one by Goodman, does it begin to have the appeal that it had at the hands of its originators. And so that side of the disc now under discussion is pretty much just one of those things. But when we come

to *Big John Special*, on the reverse, we have an entirely different matter to deal with. Here is one of the most compelling swing numbers ever turned out by Goodman or anyone else. I'm not quite sure, but I believe "killer-diller" is the term used to describe as powerfully rhythmic a concoction as this when one or more from the *haut monde* are gathered together to discuss matters artistic. Written by Horace Henderson, it has long been a conspicuous part of the Henderson repertoire, and it was only natural that as fervent an admirer of Henderson as Goodman should acquire it for his own use. What he does with it is plenty and it can well be rated one of the best Goodmans to date.

AAAA—*Happy Farmer*, and *Egyptian Barn Dance*. Raymond Scott Quintette. Brunswick 8144.

● These are the two most recent bits of musical surrealism from the pen of that rather fascinating figure, Raymond Scott. If there is less originality in them than in some of the others, there is also less straining for effect and somewhat more solid musicianship. *Happy Farmer* is one of the most delightful things he has yet turned out, even if, as noted above, it has not the slightly delirious implications of *Restless Night On Board an Ocean Liner*, for instance, or *The Penguin*.

AAA—*Op' Man Mose*, and *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8155.

● You are no more surprised than I am to find Eddy Duchin in the swing column this month. How times have changed! Of course, Duchin's own piano work is no closer to Fats Waller or Art Tatum than it ever was, but he has acquired a band which swings with a moderate degree of competence and a gal vocalist in Patricia Norman of more than unusual potency. And it is this very gal vocalist who contributes, I am sorry to say, the best talking point in this record. Listen very carefully to *Op' Man Mose* and if you aren't shocked out of a year's growth by what you seem to be hearing from the mouth of the estimable Miss Norman, I shall be very much surprised, even pained. Of course, she just can't be singing the word that she seems to be singing; it is all an unfortunate coincidence and hurry up and get a copy of it before it's withdrawn.

AAA—*Why Pretend*, and *China Clipper*. Hudson-de Lange Orchestra. Brunswick 8147.

● These are two typical Will Hudson effusions, the first in his best sentimental vein which has already given us *You're Not the Kind, Moonglow, I'll Never Tell You I Love You* and many others, of which this is a worthy example, and the second is another of those swing novelties which he turns out with such an apparent lack of effort. Never strikingly original but always sound and effective, they are always worth a hearing and *China Clipper* is one of the best of them.

OTHER CURRENT POPULAR DISCS OF MERIT

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality)

AAA—*A-Tisket A-Tasket*, and *Liza*. Chick Webb and his Orch. Decca 1840.

AAA—*You and Me*, and *The Moon Looks Down and Laughs*. Art Kassel and his Kassel-in-the-Air. Bluebird B-7632.

AAA—*Oh, Lady Be Good*, and 8, 9 and 10. Slim and Slam. Vocalion 4163.

AAA — *Sent for You Yesterday*, and *Swinging the Blues*. Count Basie and his Orchestra. Decca 1880.

AAA—*Says My Heart*, and *Oh Faithless Maid*. Andrews Sisters. Decca 1875.

AAA—*Washboard Blues*, and *'Round My Old Deserted Farm*. Mildred Bailey and Her Orchestra. Vocalion 4139.

AAA—*Solid Mama*, and *Tippin' At the Terrace*. Earl Hunes and his Orch. Vocalion 4143.

AAA—*Who's Sorry Now*, and *March of the Bob Cats*. Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. Decca 1865.

AAA—*Gershwin Medley*. Harry Roy and his Orchestra. Decca 1872.

AA—*Let's Break the Good News*, and *Mannone Blues*. Wingy Mannone and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-7633.

AA—*I'm Falling for You*, and *Bluer Than Blue*. Clarence Williams' Trio. Vocalion 4157.

AA—*I Hadn't Anyone 'Till You*, and *There's a Far Away Look In Your Eyes*. Jimmy Dorsey and his Orch. Decca 1834.

AA—*Saving Myself for You*, and *We Can't Go On This Way*. Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight. Decca 1846.

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5:00 P.M.—Marion Talley and Koestner's Orch.

Mondays—

- 6:15 P.M.—Benno Rabinoff, violinist.
8:30 P.M.—Voice of Firestone

Tuesdays—

- 7:15 P.M.—Vocal Varieties

Wednesdays—

- 8:30 P.M.—Tommy Dorsey Orchestra

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7:30 P.M.—Mario Cozzi, baritone

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- 8:00 P.M.—Cities Service Concert
9:00 P.M.—Waltz Time

Saturdays—

- 11:00 P.M.—Cincinnati Summer Opera Ass'n.

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Sundays—

- 12:30 P.M.—Radio City Music Hall
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5:30 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs
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- 3:00 P.M.—U. S. Navy Band

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8:45 P.M.—Vivian Della Chiesa, soprano

Fridays—

- 2:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band
7:15 P.M.—Music Is My Hobby
7:45 P.M.—Voices of the Night—Mixed Chorus
10:30 P.M.—Grant Park Concert

Saturdays—

- 8:00 P.M.—Design for Music
9:00 P.M.—National Barn Dance

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- 9:00 A.M.—From the Organ Loft with Julius Matt-
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12:30 P.M.—Salt Lake City Tabernacle
3:00 P.M.—Everybody's Music—Howard Barlow.
6:00 P.M.—Music for Fun
8:30 P.M.—N. Y. Philharmonic Sym. Orch.

Tuesdays—

- 6:15 P.M.—Hollace Shaw, soprano
9:30 P.M.—Camel Hour — Benny Goodman
10:30 P.M.—Grant Park Concert

Wednesdays—

- 5:30 P.M.—Music for Fun
8:30 P.M.—Paul Whiteman

Thursdays—

- 3:30 P.M.—U. S. Army Band
5:00 P.M.—Keyboard Concert
10:00 P.M.—Essays in Music

Fridays—

- 8:30 P.M.—Goldman Band Concert

Saturdays—

- 12:01 P.M.—Columbia Concert Orchestra
5:00 P.M.—Columbia Concert Orchestra
8:00 P.M.—Swing Session

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Edited by
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Volume XXIV, No. 3

"THE FRIENDS OF MUSIC" IN VIENNA (1812-1937).....	Karl Geiringer (Vienna)
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THE MUSICAL STRUCTURE OF DE QUINCEY'S DREAM-FUGUE.....	Calvin S. Brown, Jr. (Memphis, Tenn.)
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Published By

G. SCHIRMER, Inc., 3 East 43rd Street, New York City